

The Life You Deserve



By FangirlingStrangerthings

The Life You Deserve Missing Moments by FangirlingStrangerThings

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Summary: Missing moments requested from The Life You Deserve, a coming of age story that followed Mike, El and the party through their adolescence and into their adult lives. It is highly recommended to read TLYD first to understand these one-shots, but it should still make sense without doing so. Rated M for the three chapters that will contain Smut. There will be a prior warning.

1. Missing Moment 1

The Life You Deserve Missing Moments

AN: Hi all! I told you I would be back very soon, and I meant it ;-)

I would just like to thank everyone who sent me prompts for missing moments that they wished they had seen in the story.

I have tried to put them into a time line order and we'll be kicking off with Karen confronting El about her powers which was requested by *Cindy* and *Knight11*.

If you want a bit of background to this moment, it is following the events of *Chapter 20: In Sickness and In Health* after Karen learns the truth about El. Enjoy!

Missing Moment 1

March 1986

Karen stood in the door way to the living room for another moment, her eyes softening as she watched El gently stroking Mike's dark hair from his pale face whilst he slept like a baby, his head propped up on the teenage girl's lap.

Her mind was still reeling over everything that Hopper had explained to her that afternoon. The thought of those creatures, how El had saved Mike, *more* than once and how she had disappeared to another dimension. It was like something out of a sci-fi movie, not something that happened in quiet Hawkins.

Karen quietly headed to the kitchen not wanting to disturb the teenagers, and carefully put the groceries away. She was just placing a jar of sauce into one of the cabinets when she heard movement behind her.

Karen whipped around to see El walking into the kitchen, her hands laden with Mike's used soup bowl and empty glass. She tried to pretend her heart wasn't racing and that her throat wasn't drying up

in a panic at being alone with El.

Whilst she accepted the girl and understood she would never hurt Mike, or anyone else, it was still daunting to be in the presence of someone who had the ability to kill with one look.

El gave Karen a warm smile and indicated to the dirty dishes in her hand. "Mike's still asleep so I thought I would clean up." She explained before walking over to the sink.

Karen blinked, coming out of her frozen daze and smiled gratefully at the pretty fifteen-year-old. "That's very good of you sweetie, but don't worry, I'll get those washed up and you can stay with Mike." She said quickly, hurrying over and taking the bowl and glass out of El's hands.

El noticed Karen's awkwardness and the way her dark amber eyes had lingered on the girl's hands, something in that expression made El's stomach twist in nerves. "I-Is everything alright Karen?"

Karen swallowed, keeping her eyes on the sink as she cleaned the bowl. "Y-Yes sweetie, why wouldn't it be?" She asked quickly, a slight sheen of sweat appearing on her brow.

El frowned, "are you ill too? I can make you a hot drink? Or maybe some soup – "

"Do you want to bake some cookies?!" Karen suddenly blurted out, turning to the confused teenage girl. She had no idea why standing in the kitchen with El for a good hour would help the awkwardness, but Karen Wheeler would be damned if baking didn't solve problems.

El slowly smiled and nodded her head in excitement, "that would be nice, thank you."

Karen sighed slightly relieved at the warm smile on El's face and quickly finished the dishes, giving the teenage girl instructions as to where she could find all the ingredients they would need.

The two women stood side by side at the island, a chocolate chip cookie dough slowly forming before their eyes. It wasn't exactly *uncomfortable* working in silence, but El and Karen could both sense

the odd tension in the air.

Karen finally cleared her throat, keeping her eyes on the dough. "So, El...I spoke to your dad today..."

"You did?" El asked curiously, looking up at the immaculate woman as they started to break off pieces of the cookie dough and make little balls to go onto the baking tray. "Was he at the store? I *knew* he wasn't sticking to his diet..." El huffed.

El's innocent annoyance at the Chief of Police not eating healthily made Karen chuckle through the awkwardness of what she was about to discuss with the telekinetic girl. "No sweetie, I didn't see him at the store. I saw him at his office..."

El frowned and stopped balling up pieces of cookie dough, she turned her gaze onto Karen instead, watching her eyes closely. "Is everything okay?" she asked anxiously, swallowing the ball that was quickly filling her throat.

Karen sighed and dropped the piece of cookie dough she had been holding back into the bowl. She turned so that she was facing El, her dark amber eyes dancing over the young girl's face, taking in her pretty features that her son was so obsessed by.

"I *know* El." Karen exhaled in a shaky voice. "The chief, your dad...he told me everything."

There was a moment when neither of them spoke, El's breath caught in her throat and her eyes widened quickly, horror and fear filling her warm hazel orbs. Karen wanted to kick herself for putting that worry in the poor girl's eyes but as she spoke up, El spluttered at the same time.

"It's okay El – "

"I-I'm s-sorry!"

There was another pause, El's eyes brimming with tears whilst Karen was stunned by the words of the teenage girl.

She couldn't help but smile warmly, hoping that some of the

reassurance in her voice would calm El. "Sorry? Why are *you* sorry sweetie?"

El exhaled a heavy breath and looked down at the cookie dough, "I-It's my fault that Mike was involved in all of this. A-And Nancy and everyone." She sobbed, her petite body quivering.

Karen's mother instincts took over her shock and she carefully placed the palms of her hands against El's dainty shoulders. She shook her head resolutely, "this isn't your fault El. Hopper told me about your momma and how you were stolen from her. You didn't *choose* this sweetie." She smiled softly, "of course Nancy was involved because of Barb, I understand that now. And as for my son," Karen chuckled. "I think we *both* know he would do anything for you El."

El sniffled and wiped at her tears. "I would do anything for him too..." She whispered, her soft voice quivering.

Karen smiled, "I know you would sweetie. I already know that you saved his life on more than one occasion, Nancy's too. And for that, I will *always* be in your debt sweetie. You're safe here, I promise."

El slowly looked up at Karen, her eyes turning from cautious and unsure to surprised and overwhelmed. "T-Thank you." She gasped, as warm tears fell down her soft cheeks.

Karen grinned, not sure why she had been so scared of this caring, vulnerable and beautiful girl. "Come here honey," She said warmly, opening her arms for El who immediately sunk into Karen's chest, clinging to her like a child would with their mother. Karen blinked back her own tears, holding El close and trying not to think about how much this poor sweet girl had been through. As a mother, it was too painful to think about.

After a while Karen slowly moved her hands away from El's back and chuckled softly, wiping at the pretty girl's tear tracks. "I don't know about you, but I think we best get back to these cookies before my dying son wakes up."

El laughed, a soft and warm sound as they both thought about melodramatic flu ridden Mike. The women got back to work,

matching smiles on their faces as they balled up more cookie dough pieces and put them on the baking tray.

Karen had put them in the oven and before she could get to the dishes, El looked at her fleetingly and smiled slightly. "Can I show you something?" she whispered nervously.

Karen eyebrows raised in surprise, but she nodded, "of course sweetie."

El looked at the dishes and her gaze hardened as she focused. Karen jumped as the faucet turned on and the scrubbing brush got to work on the dishes. She gaped between the plates being cleaned and the incredible telekinetic girl who was making this possible.

"Okay, I'm going to begrudge doing the dishes by hand every time now." Karen chuckled, her eyes full of amazement whilst El smiled and kept her focus on the dishes, not stopping until they were done and soaking on the draining board.

Mike finally awoke from his slumber to find his mom and girlfriend sat at the island, both of them with a glass of milk in their hand whilst they munched on warm chocolate chip cookies.

"Where's *mine*?" Mike croaked in a whining voice as he trudged over to the women bare foot.

"Sorry young man but it's just soup and water for you at the moment." Karen said pointing a cookie at him.

Mike huffed and sidled up to El, giving her a grin, which Karen didn't understand could be so cute to his girlfriend right now considering his runny red nose and tired eyes. But El stared at him with complete adoration, like he was her sun.

After Mike pouted at his girlfriend, giving her his best Bambi eyes, she relented and gave him a cookie. He had a coughing fit, crumbs going everywhere, and Karen ushered him back to couch, tucking him up in his blankets to Mike's humiliation as El watched on with an amused smirk.

Once Nancy was back that night and El had gone home, Karen

ushered her daughter into the living room where she sat down next to her sick brother. She felt thankful that Ted was at his golfing weekend and Holly was at a sleepover. It gave her time to speak to her two oldest children about the revelations of the day.

They watched their mother pacing nervously in front of them, before she carefully sat down on the coffee table in front of them, her eyes soft but sad as she explained that she knew the truth about what had happened to the two of them in 1943.

Mike had immediately panicked thinking of El, but Karen was quick to assure him that she would never tell *anyone* about his girlfriend's powers and that she had already spoken with the teenage girl.

Mike calmed down enough to sit back and listen to his mom whilst she sighed, reiterating to her children that there would be no more secrets. They could be honest with her about anything, she had heard the most crazy and unbelievable story and had accepted it as the truth.

That night, just as Karen was about to fall asleep, her door creaked open and Nancy snuck in. Neither women said a word as Nancy pulled back the sheets and tucked herself in next to her mom.

Karen stared at her, smiling sadly at her oldest baby. She waited patiently until Nancy cried, telling her mom about everything that had happened to Barb, how she had held it in all of this time and how guilty she felt.

She held her daughter, easing her tears and rocking her gently to sleep. Feeling closer to her children than she had in years and swearing that she would protect them *all*, including Eleven.

AN: Let me know what you thought! These will obviously be shorter than the real chapters, but the next missing moment is dedicated to Will and Jen (Mileven and Lumax will feature) and will probably be a lot longer!

I have made a Stranger Things fan page this week on Instagram, so if you do want to follow me, my username is

2. Missing Moment 2

The Missing Moments of TLYD

AN: Hi all! I just wanted to say thank you to everyone for the feedback on the first Missing Moment and for the kudos, favourites and follows. You are all amazing and I feel very lucky! :-)

Our next prompt was requested by JakeyFryMason011 and asdfghjkl who wanted Will and Jen moments.

I must say that throughout TLYD I really fell in love with Will and Jen's relationship, and that's why you're getting a nice lengthy chapter on them. So enjoy!

Warning: There is a mention of some homophobic language from the douche bag that is Troy.

P.S. Just to note that for this story I have decided that Jennifer Hayes in Season 1 and the girl who asked Will to dance in Season 2 are the same person!

Missing Moments 2: Will and Jen's Story

Jennifer Hayes loved Will Byers before labels. Before there was 'nerd' and 'popular girl' and *long* before there was 'zombie boy'. In fact, it all started in a sand box aged five.

Her mom had gone to get her an ice cream cone whilst she sat glumly in the brittle orange sand. It had been two weeks since her dad had passed away. She was too young to understand cancer, but she was old enough to understand grief.

Her mom was trying to make things normal for her and Jen tried to smile in return, but the moment Kathy Hayes walked to the ice cream truck, tears welled up in Jen's light blue eyes and fell down her pink cheeks.

She sniffled and ran her small hands over the crusty sand wishing she could sink straight into it and never come out again. Life without her

dad, her hero and best friend just didn't make any sense. If he had become an angel like her mom told her, then why hadn't he visited? He had wings, right?

"Are you okay?" came a soft voice that made Jen lift her tear stained face.

Her eyes widened slightly as she took in the young boy in front of her holding a Tonka truck. A boy had *never* spoken to her before. In fact, she was pretty sure that they were gross, but this one was different. He had kind green eyes and cute brown hair that was cute like a bowl and made Jen want to touch it.

She sighed and shook her head resolutely, "no I'm sad. My daddy is gone."

"Oh," The boy said frowning slightly, his foot moving into the box and fidgeting slightly as he brushed his sneaker against the brittle sand. "My daddy is gone too."

Jen gasped, her eyes wide. "In heaven too?!"

The boy shrugged and sat down in the sand, "no, just gone."

They were quiet for a moment as the boy took his truck and pushed it across the grit whilst Jen watched, captivated by the bright plastic toy.

"That's really cool." Jen mumbled in awe. "My daddy used to drive trucks. Big *fire* trucks!" She said unable to hide her pride, her back straighter as she puffed out her chest and punched the air. "He was a *super hero*!"

"Like the X-Men?!" The boy gasped in amazement, his hand halting the process of the Tonka truck across the sand.

"I guess," Jen shrugged before reality hit once more. "But he's gone now..." She sniffed and looked back down at the truck whilst tears of grief spilled down her face.

The boy watched her for a while and then smiled softly, his youthful face sympathetic. He reached over and patted her hand which was

half sunk in the sand. "It's going to be okay."

Jen's head was down, and she sniffled as her eyes moved from where their hands were touching before she slowly lifted her gaze to the boy. And the look in his eyes, those pretty green eyes, made her think that maybe things *would* be okay.

She looked back at their hands and smiled softly, "don't you think I have cooties?"

The boy giggled and shook his head with a grin, "my brother says they don't exist."

Jen was immediately thrilled at the thought that cooties weren't real, and she wouldn't catch them from their hands touching. "Well I think you're too pretty to have cooties anyway..." Jen whispered with a shy smile.

The boy chuckled and shook his head, "ew! Boys aren't *pretty*."

He moved his hand and continued to play with the truck, explaining that it was a present for his birthday before letting Jen have a go. She wiped at her tears clumsily and smiled through watery eyes as she drove the truck around the sand, not realising that her mom and Joyce Byers were watching the interaction with warm smiles.

"Beep, beep!" Jen said dramatically as she made the truck move over the grit and used her hands to throw sand into the back of the skip.

"You're really good at that." The boy said with a happy smile as he watched her play. Jen looked up and beamed at him, feeling strangely exhilarated at his compliment. Maybe boys *weren't* made of slugs, snails and puppy-dog tails.

But before Jen could respond and thank the pretty boy, his mom called "sweetie! We've got to go!"

Jen felt oddly disappointed and looks down sadly at the truck, having enjoyed the presence of this boy and his cool Tonka Truck.

"You can keep it if you want." The boys said with a bashful smile.

Jen immediately gasped, looking between the truck and the boy in disbelief. "Really?! But it's your *truck*! How will you pick up things and drive them around?"

The boy shrugged and gave her a warm smile that started the flutter of something in her heart. "It makes you happy. I want you to have it."

"Thank you." Jen smiled brightly before looking down at the sand and blushing. "You're the sweetest boy I've *ever* met." She ignored the fact that he was the *only* boy she had ever met.

The boy giggled and stood up from the sand with a shy grin. "That's cool...um you are quite nice too. When you're not crying and sad."

Jen smiled feeling all light and fluffy. The boy was about to leave when she remembered something important and shouted to him, "what's your name?!"

The boy turned to her, the green eyes making her feel funny. "William Byers. What's yours?"

And just naming the boy made Jen's little heart swoon. "Jennifer Hayes." She replied with a grin. "Maybe see you soon William?"

He chuckled, "everyone calls me Will."

"Oh okay, well you can call me Jen then." She answered with a bashful smile because Will was just so cute! She wanted to poke his cheek to see if it was as soft as it looked.

"Bye bye Jen!" Will said with a wave as his mom called him again.

"Bye Will. Thank you for the truck." Jen called with a sigh of contentment as she picked up the Tonka Truck and hugged it to her chest.

"You're welcome!" He said with another wave and a big smile that showed off the three gaps where the tooth fairy has taken his teeth.

Jen watched him go, clutching onto the truck all the while and sighed, because she's pretty sure she's in love.

It was another two months before Jen saw Will again. It was the first day of kindergarten and she had made it to the lunch break, feeling nervous as she looked around the large playground.

There were girls squealing with excitement as they skipped using their jump ropes, boys were shouting as they ran after one another declaring war as they played Cowboys and Indians.

And there in the corner of the playground was Will Byers, alone on the swing, looking nervous and edgy as he watched the other children.

Jen's nervous frown immediately lifted, and she grinned, feeling giddy and excited that he was *here*. Her pretty brown-haired boy was actually in school with her!

She beamed, her small fists clenching around the straps of her back pack as she started to happily walk towards her friend. Jen's mind was always running wild with everything she wanted to tell him.

She wanted him to know that she still loved the Tonka truck and had been using it to transfer her Barbie dolls across her bedroom. She needed him to know that she had a loose tooth and couldn't wait for the tooth fairy to pay her a visit. And then she would tell him that they should *definitely* get married in the school playhouse and play family together.

But before Jen could take another step closer to Will, another boy with floppy dark hair and pale skin was nervously approaching him. She stopped short, her mouth gaping slightly as she watched the boys feebly interact.

It took one question from the dark-haired boy and one answer from Will, and suddenly they were both grinning foolishly. The boy now sat on the swing set too and both boys played, giggling and talking avidly.

Jen immediately felt glum, her fists loosening from her back pack as she watched them with a mixture of jealousy and sadness. She wanted to join them. For a moment Jen decided to just *ask* if she

could play with them too, but then three girls crossed her path.

The middle one was blonde and tall with pretty features. The other two looked similar to her, in a way they looked like clones of the taller one.

"What's your name?" the taller one asked bluntly making Jen jump slightly at the abruptness of this girl's voice.

"J-Jen." The brunette answered anxiously, her blue eyes flicking from one girl to the next.

"I'm Stacey," The tall one answered, pressing her hand delicately to her own chest before indicating to the two other blondes. "And this is Kimberly, and this is Amy." The two clones gave Jen a small wave each which she returned nervously.

"Um, i-it's nice to meet you." Jen mumbled shyly, giving the girls a smile.

Stacey appraised her for a moment and then grinned satisfactory. "You're pretty and you seem cool. So, do you want to be my friend?"

Jen was taken aback by Stacey's question and her eyes treacherously glanced to Will who was now laughing hard, his head flung back whilst the pale dark-haired boy snorted from his giggles.

"Yes please." Jen answered with a weak smile.

Jen tried to approach Will again but found herself constantly busy with Stacey and the clones who always seemed to demand attention and distract her.

When Jen was rarely free, she would smile in relief and head towards Will, but he looked so happy and busy with the pale one and the dark-skinned boy that he was now also friends with. Jen would lose her nerve and leave the boys to play.

But being with the girls wasn't all that bad. Jen finally had girls to keep secrets with, friends who she could play Barbies with, girls to braid her hair and giggle with in the playground. It felt good and it was fun. But none of that would distract Jen from staring at Will

when she got the chance. She would blush and giggle to herself, he was just so cute.

And there would be the rare occasion when Jen got to draw next to Will in class and he would greet her like an old friend, with a sweet gaping grin and a spark in his eyes. Jen would blush and act coy, telling him he could keep her drawings if he wanted.

He giggled and told her she wasn't very good at drawing, but then would cheer her up by giving her one of his own completed pictures to take home. Will didn't know that Jen rushed up to her bedroom the moment she got home that day and stuck the picture of a butterfly to her wall. She would lie on her bed and sigh blissfully, staring at his artwork feeling like the luckiest girl in the whole world.

Jen didn't have any concept of labels until the first grade.

She was sat at a picnic bench with Stacey, Kimberly and Amy, and picking at her lunch, too distracted by watching Will playing some sort of dragons and knights' game with the boys she now knew were called Mike Wheeler and Lucas Sinclair.

Jen held her chin in her palm and sighed quietly, her little heart fluttering as she watched the way the warm summer breeze brushed through Will's hair. It just looked so soft that her fingers twitched, desperate to touch it.

Stacey snorted disdainfully, her attention being drawn to the three boys when Lucas let out a high-pitched scream as his character was killed by Mike. He pretended to stumble before falling dramatically to the floor.

"They're such *nerds*." Stacey scoffed whilst Amy and Kimberly sniggered cruelly.

Jen frowned, lifting her chin off her palm and turning to the girls. "Why would it matter if they *are* nerds?" She asked as confidently as she could, hoping they didn't realise that she had no idea what a nerd *was*.

Stacey sneered, "because they're total *losers*. Did you see those hideous sweaters the pale one wore last winter?! And that Lucas is so *girly* when he screams and don't get me started on the little one's *hair*!"

Jen felt colour flush to her cheeks, her expression filled with indignation. "What's wrong with his hair?!"

Stacey cackled nastily causing the clones to copy, immediately making Jen feel alienated. "Jen, his hair is so stupid. Like his mom totally used a bowl but did the worst job ever. I think it's because he's poor – "

"Don't talk about him like that." Jen immediately snapped, her blue eyes narrowing at Stacey who stopped laughing and observed the irritated brunette with curiosity.

Her eyes finally narrowed, and an evil smirk plucked onto her lips, "ew, don't tell me you like the little weakling Jen."

"Jen and Will sitting in a tree, K-I-S-S-I-N-G!" Kimberly and Amy goaded whilst Stacey sniggered, Jen turned red and clammy.

"I-I don't like Will like *that*..." she mumbled, her gaze focused on the picnic bench.

Her heart was racing, her palms sweating as she realised that Stacey was on to her. Jen was six and a half, her world revolving around these girls and terrified of losing them. Terrified of not being able to hide behind them, terrified of having to be *herself* in a such a big and daunting school.

"Well you better not like him Jen or you can't be our friend anymore." Stacey said solemnly, crossing her arms and staring at the brunette sternly.

Jen paled and slowly brought her light blue eyes up from the picnic bench and onto the leader. "I...I don't like him." She whispered whilst her stomach turned, and her heart squeezed. Stacey smirked and dropped the topic.

Through the rest of the 1st grade and all the way through to the 5th

grade, Jen hid her feelings about Will. She admired him from a distance, her knees feeling weak when she saw him laugh and her heart fluttering madly when he caught her eye now and again and smiled. She sighed heavily, hoping one day things would change.

5th grade brought the arrival of two boys. Two boys *very* different from one another.

The first being Dustin Henderson; a sweet boy with crazy curls who proudly explained that he had a condition called cleidocranial dysplasia and liked to demonstrate what he could do with his arms. He was immediately welcomed into 'the party' of Will, Mike and Lucas. The four of them looked like they had been best friends since birth and Jen was secretly frustrated that *she* couldn't join their group so easily.

The second boy was Troy Harrington. Jen immediately felt uneasy about him, as his dark eyes scowled around at his new classmates, something controlling and aggressive about his demeanour.

It didn't take long for Jen to realise that he was a bully. He soon became friends or maybe just acquaintances with another boy in their grade who liked to pick on Will and his friends, but Troy was ten times worse.

He overheard the party talking eagerly about their next game of D&D which Will had briefly explained to Jen in art class was a fantasy role-playing game that the boys all had characters in. She had thought it sounded cute, loving how excitable Will's grin got when he talked about it.

Troy didn't agree. He didn't just bully the boys calling them nerds, he would pick on them individually. Calling Lucas 'midnight', Mike 'frog face', Dustin 'toothless' and Will 'fairy'.

Jen had no idea what Troy gained from calling the boys these names and it pained her to see the affect it had on them. Whilst she had gotten used to the boys being so lively and excitable over the years, they retreated in on themselves. Becoming more inclusive to protect themselves and hanging out in corners of the playground away from

everyone else...including Jen.

She would watch on, craning her neck to try and see what Will was up to whilst Stacey moaned about her first boyfriend Chad and how he "*totally* doesn't get me". When she noticed Will break away from the boys and head inside, Jen took her chance.

"I'll be right back." She quickly stuttered to Stacey and the clones before getting up abruptly and hurrying to follow Will into the school.

She cringed when she realised he had gone into the bathroom and had to try and casually rest against the wall as if she wasn't waiting for him to come out.

The door swung open and Will emerged looking tired and sad, his eyes having lost some of their sparkle after the weeks and weeks of bullying.

"Hi," Jen squeaked, wanting to kick herself for the sudden nervous butterflies that were causing a battle in her stomach.

Will jumped, clearly not having expected her to be standing in the corridor. His green eyes found her blue ones and he smiled weakly, averting his gaze to the floor. "Um...hi Jen..."

There was an awkward silence for a moment, an elephant in the room that Jen wanted to address but was scared of making things worse. "Are you okay?" she finally blurted out, feeling breathless.

Will's head snapped up and he blushed, trying to shrug nonchalantly. "Why wouldn't I be?" he mumbled.

Jen sighed and played with the sleeve of her sweater. "Um because... because of what Troy has been saying about you. And um, about the others too..."

"Oh," Will said feebly, his pink cheeks now turning red. There was another tense silence, both of them glancing at each other before looking down at the floor.

Jen wouldn't have even thought Will was speaking if she hadn't been

looking at his lips at the time. "It's not true what he says about me..." he muttered so quietly.

"What do you mean?" Jen asked in a hushed whisper. Her chest tight and her palms clammy as she looked at Will's red face.

"I'm not...I mean, I like...girls." Will choked out breathlessly looking beyond mortified.

"Oh." Is all Jen could think to say. She was relieved, even though she hadn't believed Troy anyway. But now she was panicking because when he said he liked girls, did that mean he liked *a girl*? Or that he liked multiple girls? Her eleven-year-old brain was aching trying to understand.

The school bell rang out through the empty corridors, making Jen and Will jump, both of them startled out of their quiet moment. They smiled at each other, shy and hesitant before whispering "bye" and going their separate ways.

November 1983 was the most heart wrenching time of Jen's young life. The month had started as it normally did, Jen pining after Will and blushing every time they would say hello in the hallways.

But November 6th came, and *everything* changed. The next day Jen found it odd that Will wasn't in homeroom or in English later that afternoon. He was never off school, and his absence was very noticeable. Not just to Jen but to the Mike, Lucas and Dustin.

Around lunch time there was a rumour going around school that the Chief of Police had come into the school and spoken to the boys and everyone speculated why. Jen immediately drew the connection to Will and started to panic.

By the end of the school day there was news that Will Byers had gone missing and Jen felt like her heart lurched, threatening to break out of her chest.

Her mom Kathy and new step dad Paul tried to ease her worries, joining in on the search parties but refusing to let her come out and

join. After one evening when Jen tried to sneak out of the house, her mom pulled her back, crying and weeping that she couldn't lose her too.

When the news came out that Will's body had been found, Jen was violently sick in her bed. Sobbing and refusing to believe her mother's words. She cried into her pillow and eventually slept from exhaustion in her mom's arms.

She would clutch the Tonka truck, stare up at the butterfly drawing through red and puffy eyes and feel numb. It didn't feel real, it *couldn't* be real. How could there be a world without Will Byers in it?

Jen had to go back to school, but her mind wasn't present. She was surprised when the boys turned up to assembly with a girl she didn't know but she was more taken by how normal they seemed. They were quiet and irritable but still quite relaxed in a strange way.

When she overheard a fight, Jen was not surprised to see Mike fighting with Troy. She smiled haughtily when Troy finally got his comeuppance and pissed his pants in front of the whole student body. She had no idea what Mike had done to him for that to happen, but Jen didn't question it.

The girls had been finishing gym class when Stacey teased that Will was so stupid and clumsy that it had killed him. Anger flashed through Jen, all the years of allowing her 'friend' to say things about the boy she loved and not saying anything back. That ended in the very same moment that Jen whirled around and pushed Stacey.

The blonde gasped in shock, as she fell backwards into Kimberley and Amy who scrambled to stop her from falling to the ground.

"Don't ever talk about him again!" Jen shouted, furious hot tears streaming down her face. "He was ten times the person you are Stacey!"

Stacey fumed, her face scowling and red. "That's it Jen, we're done. We aren't friends *anymore*."

"We never *were* friends!" Jen spat angrily before turning on her heel

and walking away.

She ended up in the bathroom, crying in the stall, her head in her hands as she realised that she was going to have to accept that Will wasn't coming back. She sniffled and hiccupped, digging into her bag for a pen and graffitiing the bathroom stall in her small and neat scrawl, '*Remember Will Byers*' she wrote inside of a pink heart. She smiled weakly at her work and took a deep breath, knowing she had to try and move on.

But a couple of days later Jen would discover that she didn't *need* to move on. News reporters would flock into Hawkins with the news that Will Byers had been found alive and another poor child had drowned at the quarry instead.

She was numb once again, but this time by the shock of Will being alive. She didn't believe the news until she begged her mom to let her go and see her old friend in the hospital.

It was Will's third day at Hawkins Memorial Hospital and Jen hesitantly lingered by the door of his room. He was asleep, looking exhausted, thin and weak but *alive*. Jen's heart raced, and her lower lip trembled at the beautiful sight.

His mom was also sleeping in a plastic chair, her arms crossed on the bed and her head laying on top of them, clearly wanting to be as close to her son as possible.

Jen crept into the room, a small item in one hand and a '*Get Well Soon*' card in the other. She watched Will for another moment, taking in his soft features, his sharp cheek bones, his delicate brown locks and his slender frame. She blushed, her heart exploding with happiness that he was here.

Not wanting to wake him up, Jen carefully placed the card on his trolley and then very quietly placed the item she had been carrying onto the end of his bed. She smiled at him tenderly before turning and leaving.

Just as Jen was leaving the room, Will's eyelids fluttered open weakly and he blinked, seeing a flash of long brown hair whipping around a

corner before disappearing. He frowned and looked down when his toes touched something.

Will's eyes widened, and he couldn't help but grin, knowing who his visitor had been the moment he looked at the object.

It was his Tonka truck.

Will sighed and closed his eyes, remembering being five years old and seeing the prettiest girl in the whole world for the first time. He remembered his mom saying how she couldn't afford to get him another Tonka truck, but it hadn't mattered. Because Jen had needed it.

"She should have it because she's sad. She's sad mommy."

When Will came back to school Jen was overwhelmed by her feelings for him. She was so relieved to see him alive and well, and yet she had no idea how to act around him. His absence had only solidified her romantic feelings for him, and she knew that without a doubt she was in love with him.

But Will started to push her away, becoming uncomfortable and shiftily if she smiled and waved at him. She knew the bullying had gotten worse, although bizarrely Troy seemed to keep his distance.

People called him 'zombie boy', taunted him, said he smelt like the dead and put mean and cruel notes in his locker. The boy with the bright light in his eyes was fading and Jen hated it.

His friends didn't seem to have fared much better. Lucas and Dustin were quieter, and Mike just looked devastated and exhausted at all times. It was as if someone he loved really *had* died.

Jen continued to try and approach Will, wanting him to know she didn't think what everyone else thought. He wasn't a zombie boy, he was Will.

She exhaled with determination and walked down the hallway towards his locker where he was scrunching up a piece of paper and chucking it back into his locker.

"Hey Will," Jen called shyly, smiling tenderly as she took in the features she loved so much.

Only this time there was a crease in his brow and a tiredness in his eyes. "Hi Jen," he mumbled defeatedly as he slammed a few books into his locker.

Jen looked down at her feet and took a deep breath trying to be brave. "So, um...I was wondering if you wanted to go to the playground this weekend? I know we're getting a little old for the swings, but it's still fun. And we could talk maybe...as um friends of course." She rambled feeling anxious.

Will slowly looked up at her, his eyes sad and heavy. "Jen we can't... we can't be friends..." he blurted out feebly.

Jen flinched, she couldn't help it. "W-Why? Why can't we be friends?"

And then feelings that Will had been suppressing for *years* erupted in a frustrated shout. "Because we can't! I'm zombie boy okay? I don't get to have f-friends like you. You...girls like you don't hang out with boys like me okay? I'm a nerd, you're a popular girl."

Jen blinked, her lower lip was trembling and her chest was painfully tight. "But – "

"No. We can't be friends. I-I'm sorry Jen." Will said in a shaky voice before he pushed past her quickly.

Jen let her tears drop and she foolishly wiped at them feeling so *stupid*. She told her twelve-year-old self to get over Will Byers, he would never want her, not even as a friend. But love was a powerful thing and it wasn't going to give up its hold.

Jen was walking to Math when she felt someone put a heavy arm around her shoulders and walk into step with her. She turned and recoiled realising it was Troy.

He smirked at her and tightened his grip on her shoulder. "Sup Jen... so I've been thinking you should come to the Snow Ball with me." He said wiggling his eyebrows whilst Jen cringed at his slimy

demeanour.

"No thanks Troy." Jen immediately said, not even bothering to try and be polite. This was the stupid boy who had tormented the love of her life since the 5th grade. As if she owed this bully *any* kindness.

Troy snorted, "well who else are you going to go with? You can't go with fairy, he's not into you. He's only into other queers."

Jen stopped and rounded on Troy, shoving his arm off her shoulders. "First of all, don't talk about Will like that. Even if he was gay or not, it's none of your business. And secondly, don't *ever* touch me again." She fumed.

Troy huffed and glared at Jen, "you are lucky you're so damn pretty. Stacey disowned you, the rest of the school would if you weren't so hot. I guess being stupid doesn't matter when you're nice to look at." He said inching closer to her whilst she backed away.

"Leave her alone Troy."

Jen and Troy turned in surprise to see Will stood in front of them, his cheeks flushed and his beautiful green eyes angry as he looked at the bully.

Troy burst out laughing, "and what are you going to do zombie boy?!"

Will clenched his fists and took a step closer to the bully, "I'll give you five seconds to run away otherwise you can have another broken arm. Do you remember how you broke the other one?" Troy paled slightly, his eyes widening as he stared at Will who continued, "yeah, my friends told me all about it. So, you better leave now before we get our friend to do the same thing. Maybe even break more than your arm..." Will warned angrily.

Troy spluttered, genuine fear in his eyes before he turned and hurried away. Jen watched the bully leave, her mouth gaping open in shock. She had *never* seen or heard Will talking back to a bully and It was amazing.

When Troy was out of sight Will heaved a sigh of relief and chuckled

nervously. "Damn I was actually scared he was going to try and fight me."

Jen turned to Will and her cheeks immediately blushed and her heart hammered in her chest. He was just...*perfect*.

"Thank you Will," Jen said softly, a warm smile spreading on her lips as she looked up at the boy bashfully.

Will's cheeks flushed, and he put his hands in his pocket. "Oh um, i-it's no big deal. I just...I didn't like how he was talking to you." He admitted, looking down at his sneakers and finding them very interesting.

Jen felt awkward, she wanted to hug him or ask him on a date, but she remembered how he said they couldn't be friends anymore. She sighed and slowly looked up at his pretty face. "Are you going to the Snow Ball?"

Will met her gaze quickly and then thought better of it and looked away. "Um y-yeah..."

Jen was able to hide the excited smile and squealed internally instead of expressing her genuine happiness at this news. "Cool, um...maybe I'll see you there Will." She said sweetly, smiling softly but not wanting to overstep the boundaries he had set.

Will nodded, and a cute lopsided grin appeared on his lips. "Yeah maybe."

The night of the Snow Ball Jen sat with two of her new friends from drama club, Nicole and Yasmine. The girls danced together and enjoyed scoffing their faces on cake and non-alcoholic punch. But Jen couldn't stop herself from exhaling deeply as she watched Will from across the room.

He was sat with his party of course and the red headed girl Max. Jen had no idea what the cool girl had done to get into the party so quickly, but she knew Dustin and Lucas had been trying to impress her in school and clearly it had worked.

Jen's blue eyes went back to Will, he was standing up with Mike,

Lucas and Max and greeting Dustin whose hair looked...um... *interesting*.

The music changed to the first slow song of the evening, '*Time After Time*'. Jen wanted to moan because she *loved* Cyndi Lauper and would love to dance to this song with a certain someone.

A million thoughts raced through Jen's mind; she thought about all the years of bullying Will had received, the nerd comments, the poor comments and now zombie boy. She thought of Stacey and Troy taunting him, but mostly she thought about the five-year-old boy in the sand box. She thought about the Tonka truck she had returned when he was ill, and she thought about him sticking up for her to Troy.

Jen exhaled bravely and stood up from her table, her eyes set on Will as she crossed the dance floor. Fairy, nerd, zombie boy, it didn't matter what they called him because as she stepped closer to the boy who made her heart sing, she knew she had *always* loved him and always would. He was Will, maybe he was zombie boy and maybe he was a nerd. But he was *Will* and she loved him.

Max and Lucas walked past her, hand in hand and headed to the dance floor as Jen finally arrived in front of Mike, Dustin and Will.

"Hey zombie boy," she exhaled, a small smile on her face when Will gaped at her in surprise. "Do you wanna dance?"

Will's green eyes widened and he looked between Jen and Mike almost pleadingly, "er...ermm...em.." was all that came out of his mouth.

Jen tried not to giggle at how cute he was. She knew he was trying to accept that he might call himself zombie boy or nerd, but Jen knew who he was and wanted him anyway.

Mike seemed to give Will a bit of a shove and he finally blurted out words. "I mean...erm...yeah, sure."

Jen beamed, feeling happier than she had in years as she took Will's hand for the first time since they were five years old and found a

place on the dance floor. There wasn't any hesitation in her putting her hands on his shoulders and Will seemed to relax slightly once his palms were on her waist. Jen tried not to grin too widely at how amazing it felt to dance with him.

The rest of the night was just magical and the start of something *deeper*. They only had eyes for each other as they danced, song after song, smiling happily and giddily. Once they were too warm to dance anymore, they got some punch and then lingered in a corner of the school gym, talking and giggling about everything and nothing.

It didn't matter what they were talking about, it was just being close and soaking in each other's presence that made Jen the happiest.

There would be a lot of toying about over the next year, mainly from Will's side.

Even when Jen smiled at him in the hallway and his heart fluttered, or she giggled when he did something stupid, or even when she gave him a Valentine's card, he still didn't feel good enough for her.

She was a popular girl and always had been. He was a nerd and zombie boy and he accepted those labels, it was just crazy to think that Jen, the smart blue-eyed beauty accepted it too.

Will tried to show his feelings for Jen without actually *confessing* them. He would stick up for her if Stacey or Troy taunted her for talking to him, he would return her hugs, secretly smelling her hair and grin against her shoulder, and he would draw her pictures.

On Valentine's day Will didn't buy her a card but made her one. It was a drawing of a bear floating up to the sky and holding onto two love heart balloons. He snuck it into her locker, a blush on his cheeks but a tingle in his heart.

Jen loved it and he loved her card too, looking at it way too much but just unable to comprehend that she could honestly like him back.

It was finally summer, and Will knew he needed to do *something* about his feelings for Jen because it was eating him up inside. He

sought the advice of his best friend, sitting in the basement with Mike and explaining how he badly wanted to take Jen on a date.

The Paladin poised his lips in thought for a moment but then smiled, "what about a double date to take the pressure off? Me and El, you and Jen. We could go see Back to The Future for the fourth time. El hasn't been yet." Mike explained, a giddy smile on his face when he mentioned his girlfriend.

Will smiled, really liking the idea. He was quick to ask Jen, ringing her landline from Mike's kitchen whilst his best friend stood next to him offering encouragement.

"Hello?" answered Kathy, Jen's mom.

"Um...h-hi Mrs Stevenson. It's um Will Byers, I was just - "

"Oh Will!" Kathy said happily. "I'll just call Jen for you now..."

Will blinked in surprise and turned to Mike who just shrugged and smiled.

"Hi Will?" Jen's pretty voice answered slightly breathless.

"Oh um...h-hi Jen. It's Will..."

Mike snorted, and Will hit himself on the forehead.

Jen just giggled though and waited for him to continue. Will exhaled deeply and decided to just ask her quickly, maybe it was less painful like taking off a band aid. "I-was-wondering-if-you-wanted-to-go-to-the-movies-with-me-on-a-date." He rambled quickly whilst Mike rolled his eyes and smirked.

Jen gasped, hearing the word date and melting inside because he was so cute. "A date? To the movies?" she reiterated, desperate not to get too excited.

"Y-Yeah. Um...a double date actually," Will said after noticing Mike gesturing to himself. "With Mike and his um...his..."

Mike looked at Will in exasperation, but his best friend was internally

worrying about how to explain Eleven seeing as she wasn't in school yet. "Mike's met someone over the summer, and we um thought we could double date." Will said feebly, the hand holding the phone was shaking.

Jen grinned, smiling into the phone as she spoke. "I would love that Will. What are we going to see?"

Will relaxed and gave Mike a thumbs up to gesture that she said yes. Feeling a lot calmer now, he managed to give Jen all of the details and even had a relaxed and fun conversation with her about high school.

When he finally put the phone down he had a dreamy smile on his face and sighed happily.

"You've really got it bad huh?" Mike teased with a friendly smile.

Will snorted, "I'm not on gross Mike and El level, but I'm getting there." He joked back making his best friend laugh and clap him on the back as the boys moved to raid the fridge.

What was meant to be Jen, Will, El and Mike going to the movies ended up with Max, Lucas, Dustin and Melissa joining too.

Will was initially annoyed by the arrival of all his friends because it felt everyone was watching him with Jen, but it also took the pressure off too.

Jen immediately took to El, excited that she would be joining them in high school and wanting to know more about her. And whilst this made Mike slightly anxious, Will couldn't help but grin foolishly as he watched the long-haired brunette. Her blue eyes were so light, and he swore that if you looked close enough they had streaks of yellow in them. Jennifer Hayes was pure beauty.

From the start of the movie, Will's eyes weren't on the screen but on Jen's hand. He swallowed nervously, a slight sheen of sweat on his forehead as he tried to build up the courage to place his palm in hers.

He ate a mouthful of popcorn but left his hand on the arm rest where it twitched slightly from apprehension. Will stared at her hand, just a

little bit further up the arm rest and he tried to calm his pounding hand as he very slowly –

Jen's hand moved of its own accord to Will's and she entwined their fingers, giving him a coy smile that made Will's heart almost explode with happiness. He smiled back at her, feeling elated and weightless. Their hands stayed together throughout the movie and all the way to her mom's car.

Will went to bed that night sighing happily and staring up at the ceiling, wondering if he would have the guts to ask out the most beautiful girl in school. And daring to think about what would happen if she said yes.

That opportunity didn't come until early November when Will was walking Jen to class. He loved any chance he got to talk to her, even if it was the few minutes of escorting her to French or English. Her laugh, her sweet smile and bright blue eyes made his stomach twist in knots.

The only disadvantage to their daily meet ups was the gossip and the bullying that came with it. Troy had a crush on Jen, everyone knew it and he would stop at nothing to get her which meant his bullying of Will only intensified.

He would punch Will in the ribs, shove him against walls, put homophobic notes in his locker and taunt Will in gym that he was going to do vulgar things to Jen. For the most part Will tried to ignore it, even though the things he said about Jen made him seethe and the boys had to hold him back from trying to start something.

What they didn't know was that Will had started a self-defence class, just like Jonathan had around his age. It was helping him build tone and strength and his mom approved of anything that was going to help him become more resilient.

So as Will smiled and chuckled with Jen as she told him a funny story about her mom and stepdad, Troy came out of nowhere with his cronies and grabbed Will by the shoulders ready to push him, but instead the smaller boy grabbed the bully's arm and twisted it.

Troy yelped in pain and jumped away from Will who rounded on the bullies with a glare. Jen hid behind Will in amazement.

"You're dead Byers! For real this time!" Troy yelled through humiliation and anger.

He went to swing at Will who expertly missed the punch before delivering his own jab to Troy's side, aiming a successful punch to the bully's cheek.

Troy grunted in pain and stumbled back clutching at his split cheek whilst Will breathed heavily and shook out his painful fist. Troy's cronies didn't do anything, stepping back with their mouths hanging open at what had just happened.

For the next part of the defence Will tried with all of his might to project Max. "You leave me, my friends and *especially* Jen alone. Don't *ever* touch her again." His voice deeper and his teeth clenched.

Troy spluttered, looking between Will and Jen who was looking amazed and simply victorious. "Fine," he spat out before throwing a dirty look at the pretty girl. "You're totally not worth it anyway." He mumbled darkly before shoving past them. His cronies all blinked coming back to reality and hurried after their leader.

Will clenched and unclenched his fist curious if it would bruise whilst Jen turned to him, chest heaving and eyes wide in awe. He slowly looked away from his fist, as his gaze locked on her. His heart tingled with adrenaline at the look on her beautiful face.

"Will..." Jen breathed in astonishment. "That was..." But what words she was going to say didn't come out, instead she took action. Her soft palms cupped his face, leaving Will only enough time to gasp before she brought his head down to meet hers in the middle and kissed him.

Will froze for half a second, his eyes the size of saucers as her soft lips pressed against his. A million butterflies fluttered around his body and his heart practically melted straight onto the school floor. His lungs expanded and then he shut his eyes, chasing her lips when she went to pull away.

His lips applied more pressure to hers as he sank into the incredible feeling of kissing for the first time. He wanted to laugh and smile but could only concentrate on one thing, and that was kissing Jen forever.

Her hands moved from his cheeks and wrapped around his neck while Will's hands moved gently to her waist, his heart pounding at the feel of her body. Their mouths eventually pulled away for necessary air, but Jen stayed close, her cheeks blushed a pretty pink as she leaned her forehead against his.

"T-That was..." Will stammered whilst a hopeless grin of happiness spread quickly over his lips. "Wow."

Jen giggled, the sweet noise sending love hearts straight to Will's eyes making him wonder if he currently looked how Mike looks when he is staring at El.

"I can't tell you how long I've wanted to do that." Jen whispered, a shy smile on her lips as her eyes flickered down to his mouth.

"Y-You can do it again if you w-want." He gulped anxiously, desperate to have that feeling again, craving it like air or water.

Jen grinned coyly and then her lips were pressed to Will's once more and he was happily drowning in her. Her scent, the smell of her shampoo, her soft skin against his, the feel of her waist as he gripped just a little bit tighter. It was *perfection*.

When they pulled their lips from each other, Jen exhaled blissfully but then blinked as she looked around the hall way and giggled. "Will?"

"Y-Yeah?" Will answered in a low whisper, his eyes still on her glistening lips.

"I think we're late for class, like really late." Jen snorted happily whilst Will blinked, coming back to his senses before he realised that the hallways were completely empty.

"Oh," he answered weakly. Part of him wanting to rush to class and apologise to his teacher and the other half wanting to suggest they

carry on kissing in a supply closet seeing as they're late *anyway*. He was after all an almost fifteen-year-old with the most beautiful girl in his arms, how could he *not* want to kiss her more?

"I guess we were kissing longer than we thought." Jen said giddily, biting her lower lip as she tried to contain her grin.

"Y-Yeah I guess so." Will said smiling foolishly as he took in Jen's pink cheeks, stunning lips and happy eyes.

"Do you want to go on a date?" Jen blurted out as if this had been on the tip of her tongue for too long and she couldn't take it anymore.

She smiled bashfully, and Will couldn't help but grin. "Definitely." He answered straight away, his heart already fluttering with excitement. "Um, maybe without my friends this time." He snorted making Jen giggle as they remembered all of his friends making out with their respective partner at the movie theatre.

Their date consisted of Will and Jen going to Benny's for dinner, both of them smiling and giddy as they held hands under the table and ignored their food, too caught up in each other.

They walked around Hawkins, their fingers swinging together gently as they chanced glances at one another with coy smirks before heading over to the playground where they had first met.

Will led Jen over to the sand box and they both carefully sat on the wooden border, taking their shoes off and letting their toes wiggle in the coarse orange sand.

They were sat close, Will's hand slowly moving to wrap around Jen's shoulders as she happily tucked into his side as they stared down at their feet, occasionally knocking each other's toes and laughing.

"I wonder if they ever changed the sand." Jen said distractedly as she grinned, leaning her head into Will's chest and closing her eyes at the wonderful sensation.

"Probably not." Will laughed as he brushed his foot against Jen's and felt his heart pounding. It had all started here in this sand box and in a way this location felt significant.

Will cleared his throat, dropping his hand from Jen's shoulder so he could turn and look at her. She sat up and smiled at him warmly, the glow on her face distracting Will from what he was going to say for a while.

He entwined their hands and exhaled a shaky breath. "Jen?" he whispered vulnerably, his eyes dancing over her face.

"Yes?" she answered in a beautifully tender voice, giving his question the importance and attention that it needed.

"Will you be my girlfriend?" He asked for once without nerves. There was no hesitation or awkwardness in his question.

Jen beamed, her blue eyes brightening even more and her grin widening with happiness. "Yes. Yes, I want to be your girlfriend." She said eagerly making Will grin too because he just felt so *good*, and he didn't realise until that moment just how much he had needed her in his life. As El would say, she was his special person.

The sand box wasn't the only significant location for Will and Jen. When they had turned sixteen they were walking around Mirkwood after having a making out session in Castle Byers and stumbled across the most beautiful sight either of them had ever seen.

Hidden behind some brambles and broken trees was a beautiful lagoon. It wasn't very big, but there was a small clearing to sit in front of the clear water and the sound of the trickling brook added a beautiful aesthetic.

It became their place. A secret that only Jen and Will shared, a place where they could just be a couple and truly be themselves without any guards up or hesitations.

Whilst Jen loved splashing in the water and pulling Will in with her, he enjoyed sitting back and painting the scene, most importantly painting *her*.

They would lie in the grass together, daisies shooting up from the ground all around them as they stared at the sky and took in the

beauty of the stars.

Their hands would be laced together, and Will would sigh in contentment, his heart quivering with happiness at having Jen so close.

"I love you." He whispered, turning his gaze from the stars to see them reflected in Jen's eyes. She would always blush, and her eyes would light up with joy when he told her those words.

"I love you too." Jen whispered back through a warm smile as she closed the very small gap and kissed him, their love for one another being swept up into the passion that they felt.

But it wouldn't be until the summer came that they would give more than their love to one another.

Will was sketching Jen whilst she sat in front of him, her legs delicately tucked into her side as she tried and failed to sit still. She would giggle when Will playfully tutted at her and tried to straighten her back and lift her chin.

Will looked down at the sketch, his eyes roaming over her smooth legs bare in the white summer dress she was wearing and how beautiful the curves of her body looked. With her light blue eyes and tiny yellow streaks, pink soft lips, high cheek bones and lightly freckle-dusted nose Will realised he was looking at a masterpiece.

His green eyes slowly and nervously lifted from the paper and onto the angel in front of him. She was staring back at him, a matching intensity in her eyes as they locked on his and her chest rising and falling heavily from the tension that had built between them.

Will carefully placed his sketch pad to the side of the blanket, not taking his eyes off Jen as he crawled closer to her. His heart was pounding, and his stomach was quivering with nerves, but he knew what he wanted, and he could see it reflected in her eyes.

Jen brought her hand up to his cheek and he leaned his face into her touch, a shaky breath escaping his mouth before she pulled him closer and their lips crashed together in a passionate and

overwhelming kiss that awoke all of Will's senses.

He clutched her to him like she was his life line, their mouths deepened together as the desire fuelled their bodies and heightened the moment.

They fell back on the blanket and in the beauty and peace of their secret location, they became one entity. The air filled with their love, with the sound of their gasps, shudders and kisses as they explored each other properly for the very first time.

It was their special moment, with the person they loved the most. The feeling of *soul mate* being whispered against their joint skin and their beating hearts as they moved together, their lips still joined as they moaned and gasped with each other's desire to be as close as possible.

They would return to their lagoon, again and again over the years. The next most significant event being when they were twenty-four years old as Will turned his sketch pad over, with a nervous and beautiful smile as Jen's eyes fell on the words '*Marry Me?*'

A year later they would be married, Will's mouth dropping in disbelief as Jen walked down the aisle with her mom and step dad, looking so radiant in a floaty white lace dress. She was his *wife* and he couldn't stop the happy tears that fell down his cheeks, nor would he *want* to stop them.

She was the girl who had never took no for an answer, she had never accepted labels, but she had *always* accepted him. And he loved her more than words could ever explain.

And in the year 1998, Will would be by Jen's side holding her hand tightly and pressing sweet kisses to her forehead whilst she shook with nerves as the surgeons performed her C-section. They both watched on as their two beautiful girls arrived into the world.

Grace came first and then two minutes later Lily joined.

The room was filled with the cries of the infants and the cries of the new parents, overwhelmed and choked with emotion. Will smiled at

their baby girls, both of them bundled up in blankets and placed on Jen's chest whilst the new parents stared at their perfect girls with awe.

Will looked at Jen, leaning down and meeting her lips where she smiled against his mouth. With his wife and two baby girls, Will Byers finally realised what it meant to feel *complete*.

When the girls were five, Jen watched them playing in their own sand box with Will's old Tonka truck.

She sighed happily and beamed with love as her husband wrapped his arms around her waist and propped his chin on her shoulder. Watching their beautiful girls and feeling so safe and happy in Will's arms, Jen knew that even through the trauma of losing her dad it made her realise that even in the darkest of times there was *always* light.

AN: I'm sorry there was like zero Mileven in this, but I do hope you enjoyed it. As I said at the beginning, Jen and Will from TLYD have got a place in my heart now and I wanted to share a bit of their relationship too.

Plus I love the idea of Jennifer Hayes being the girl that Will gives his Tonka truck to!

3. Missing Moment 3

The Life You Deserve Missing Moments

AN: Thank you all so much for the amazing feedback on the Jen and Will chapter! I was quite nervous writing a whole chapter focused on another couple, but I think it went well, so thank you :-)

I'm using two prompts in this Missing Moment chapter; *ElevenEggos* wanted to see Erica interrupting Max and Lucas, *TrInItISPeLI* and a few Guest reviewers wanted to see Max and Lucas's first time.

For some background of this chapter, it takes place the same month of the camping trip in *Chapter 25: Let's Go Camping* and obviously covers the actual trip too.

Warning: There is of course Smut in this chapter! ;-) It's in the last section if you want to avoid it.

Missing Moment 3: Max and Lucas

July 1986

"Shit I can't wait to have a car," Max huffed to Lucas as they made their way to his house from the arcade, Max on her skate board and Lucas pedalling slowly on his bike to stay level with his girlfriend.

"But I thought you loved your skate board," Lucas frowned turning to Max, his dark eyes widening slightly in awe at how easy she made it look. Her slim and yet strong body controlling the slightest movement of the board as they got closer to his house.

"I do." Max said not taking her eyes off the road. "But I don't appreciate getting drenched and the winters here are fucking ridiculous."

Lucas snorted and smiled, "yeah I agree with you there." He watched her for a moment and felt his heart flutter. "But I do enjoy riding next to you. Like it's a bit of time for just you and me."

Max glanced at him and smirked whilst a pretty blush appeared on her cheeks. "We could still hang out just the two of us if we had cars you know." Her grin widened, and her eyes lit up mischievously. "In fact, we'd be able to spend *more* time together. And maybe even go and check out what that Lovers Lake is all about..."

Lucas almost crashed his bike becoming so distracted and flustered at Max's words. He cleared his throat whilst she laughed at his dazed expression. "Y-Yeah? You'd wanna go there?"

Max grinned amusedly, "of course stalker. I mean...we've gotten pretty intense without cars..." Both of them had matching flushed cheeks as they thought about the many heavy make out sessions they had shared. The touching that had turned into them removing their clothes to feel *more*, and that 'more' consisting of foreplay. They had gone so far that the only thing left was a home run according to the good old baseball analogy.

"I just want us to have more alone time together." Max added honestly, her smile sly and knowing which made Lucas's heart pound and his stomach to clench with anticipation.

"I do too." Lucas said softly, his eyes warming as he watched the happy grin developing on Max's sweet lips. *Damn that girl is beautiful.*

They carried on their journey to the Sinclair house, Lucas leaving his bike against the garage and Max tucking her board under her arm as they walked through the kitchen entrance and Lucas shouted to see if anyone was home.

Max put the skate board by the door and headed to look for some food. She was rooting through the fridge when Lucas closed the door and she yelped, retracting her hand before it could close on her. "Stalker what – "

"No one's home." Lucas's eyebrows were wiggling suggestively and there was a smirk on his handsome face that made Max's stomach lurch with excitement.

"Oh," she grinned before grabbing his hand and pulling him to his own bedroom whilst they both laughed with exhilaration.

They were kissing and stumbling up the stairs, Max's hands cupping Lucas's cheeks and walking backwards whilst his arms were securely around her waist, bringing her closer as they tried to walk clumsily to his room.

Lucas kicked his foot back to close the bedroom door and then they were falling onto his twin mattress, snorting with laughter when they fell awkwardly and bumped foreheads.

"Jesus why haven't your parents got you a bigger bed yet?" Max moaned as she rubbed at her sore forehead whilst Lucas grinned and crawled on top of her.

"Probably because they know we'd be doing something like this." He murmured against the tender skin of her neck as he placed open mouthed hot kisses to her throat.

Max bit her lower lip, trying to suppress her wild grin as she threw her head back to give Lucas more space as he sent shock waves of desire throughout her body when his teeth nibbled at her throat and collarbones and he licked and kissed the small red marks to soothe them.

"Mmm," Max hummed happily, her throat drying and her skin feeling too tight to contain her as Lucas continued to kiss her collarbone. His hand slipped under her tank top and caressed her flat stomach as Max moved her fingers to the back of his neck, pulling him closer.

Lucas moved from Max's neck, his forehead resting on hers and his body pushed against her own so that every part of them touched in a delicious shiver of excitement. Their mouths moved as one, their lips swollen from the deep and hard pressure of their caresses, their tongues sweeping over each other, heavy gasps leaving their lungs as the lust filled tension rose quickly.

Lucas's hand moved over Max's ribcage and snuck under her bra, massaging her breast and making her arch her back into the touch and whimper in pleasure. She closed her eyes and inhaled his scent deeply as they continued to kiss passionately whilst he caressed her so intimately.

Max shifted her hips up slightly, grinding her body against Lucas's and causing a gorgeous deep groan to leave his lips that she inhaled as their kisses became heavier. Their bodies moved urgently against one another, trying to ease the hot pressure spreading like fire low in their abdomens.

Lucas broke from their kiss, both of them panting as he looked down at Max through blown pupils. His eyes gazed into her bright blue eyes and he smiled, wondering how he had got so lucky to be like this with her. To know her better than anyone else. "I love you Mad Max." He whispered breathlessly.

Max grinned up at him, a smile that lifted her cheeks and made her eyes sparkle like the ocean. Only Lucas truly got to see this smile and it was a beautiful secret that they shared.

"I love you too stalker." She answered softly, her hands moving to his jaw as she slowly stroked his cheek bones with her thumbs.

"Aw and I love you too Lucey." Came the voice of Lucas's 11-year-old nightmare that he had to call Erica.

Max and Lucas yelped, jumping apart from each other, causing the tall boy to fall off his bed when he tried to turn and realised there was no mattress left.

Max brought her knees up to her chest and laughed good heartedly whilst Erica sniggered at her flustered brother who sat on his bedroom floor and glared at his little sister.

"What are you doing in my room?!" He shouted at Erica, his cheeks blushing when Max chucked a pillow into his lap to hide a certain problem.

Erica stood in the open doorway, her hand on her hip which popped in a very sassy manner. She rolled her eyes and scoffed, "oh *please*, as if I'm here to see *you*." Her eyes turned onto Max who was grinning back at her.

"Wanna listen to my new Madonna album Red?" Erica asked her favourite teen.

"Hey! You can't just steal *my* girlfriend." Lucas scolded from his position on the floor as he crossed his arms in irritation.

Erica snorted and smirked at her brother, "want me to tell mom and dad what you two were doing in here?"

Lucas paled whilst Max laughed and looked at her boyfriend. "You've got to admire her nerve." She said happily whilst hopping off the bed and walking over to Erica.

"B-But – " Lucas whined after Max who was following his little sister to her room.

She halted by the door frame and smiled back at her boyfriend. "Don't worry I won't be too long. And remember we've got that camping trip coming up, plenty of time to be...*alone*." Max reasoned before giving Lucas a mischievous grin coupled with a playful wink before she followed Erica.

Lucas watched her go, a hopeless dopey smile on his lips as he sank back down to the carpeted floor and heaved a happy sigh. He looked up at his ceiling and grinned to himself, counting down the days until the camping trip.

"Okay this mission *needs* to be pulled off with precision and agility." Dustin whispered in a tense voice as he stared at Mike, Lucas and Will whilst they huddled in the Wheeler's kitchen all clad in their swim shorts.

Mike rolled his eyes, "I really don't think this is a good idea."

"Yeah, El could actually *kill* us remember." Will said quietly, his eyes averting nervously to the back yard where El and Max were lying down in the grass, happily chatting as they soaked up some rays.

Dustin smirked, "that's why Mike's going in front."

"What?!" Mike yelped, his eyes wide as he stared at his friends.

"Well you're the last person she'd want to kill, so you're like our shield." Dustin reasoned whilst Will and Lucas snickered in

amusement.

Mike stared at Dustin with a flat look on his face. "Thanks," he deadpanned.

"Your sacrifice will not be forgotten." Lucas teased as he patted Mike's bony shoulder.

Max and El lay side by side as they exchanged stories of Mike and Lucas's sisters catching them making out.

"And then I told Holly Mike was showing me something in his *mouth*," El chuckled, wiping at tears of mirth whilst Max cackled next to her, picturing the scene of El and Mike frenching on the couch whilst Holly caught them.

"Oh my god that's nothing. Me and Lucas's were in his kitchen and I –"

But El wouldn't find out the rest of the tale because suddenly Dustin's loud voice sounded through the back yard as he yelled, "FIRE!"

Max and El only had time to blink before four water balloons came hurtling at them. Max gasped in shock as a balloon of water exploded over her head, drenching her long red hair whilst one burst on El's stomach soaking her white shirt.

The girls whirled around and stumbled to their feet whilst the boys all chuckled, grabbing more water balloons out of the bucket and rushing off to find hiding places in the yard.

"Oh, you're *dead*!" Max screamed running full speed to the bucket to grab water balloons whilst avoiding an attack by Dustin.

El just gasped and wrung out her shirt. Mike stood up from his hiding place, his laughter freezing immediately as he gawked at his girlfriend. Her white shirt had gone see through displaying her pink bra.

Max took Mike's frozen amazement to throw a water balloon which collided with his face and made him stumble backwards. She cackled in success before squealing when Lucas came up behind her and

chucked a water balloon at her back, the cold water dripping down her spine.

A full-on war began, Will immediately changing allegiances to Team El and Max after El used her powers to shoot multiple water balloons at Lucas and Dustin who yelped running for cover.

El turned to throw a water balloon at her boyfriend whose floppy black hair was curling at the ends and sticking to his face, but she paused admiring how cute he looked whilst he took his advantage. He threw another water balloon at her, laughing and running as she chased him screaming in indignation and glee.

El jumped onto Mike's back and he span her around, chuckling and grinning foolishly before letting her down and turning in her arms, both of them kissing passionately and ignoring the game whilst everyone else left them to it.

Dustin screamed as Will snuck up on him and pelted him with balloons whilst the curly haired teen yelled about mutiny.

Lucas ran to the side of the house, his hands on his knees as he panted for breath, not realising Max had noticed where he disappeared off to. He had a moment of peace before shouting out in shock as cold water burst onto his bare back.

Max giggled feeling elated before she tried to rush off, but Lucas grabbed her wrist and pulled her back. She turned to him and laughed, a warm and happy smile on her face that blanked out Lucas's brain and just made him beam at how complete she made him feel.

The beautiful red head saw the intense look in Lucas's dark eyes and her heart swooned whilst her skin heated with anticipation. She smiled at him, closing the distance as her arms wrapped around his neck and he pushed her up against the borders of the house.

"I love you," Lucas grinned, nuzzling their noses before kissing her softly hoping that the appreciation and intense love he felt for her was being transmitted through their embrace.

Max smiled against his lips, a happy sigh leaving her chest as his words reverberated against her pounding heart, covering it in beautiful liquid gold. Those words from Lucas meant more than *anything* Max had ever heard or experienced. To be accepted and loved by Lucas Sinclair was the best feeling in the whole world.

"I love you too," She whispered back, her eyes staring into his, watching the intensity warm and then burn into his widening pupils. Max had shared so much with this wonderful guy; she had opened up about her feelings, he was the first to break down her walls, he got her first and last kiss, he got her whole heart and now she wanted to give him her body too.

"Lucas?" Max whispered, surprised by the vulnerability in her voice. Lucas was too, his eyes widened as he watched her with loving concern, never having heard her speak so softly.

"Yes?" he asked nervously, his breath mingling with hers at their proximity.

Max continued to look into his eyes for a moment, soaking up the love there as a warm smile slowly started to lift her lips. There was a tension in the air now and when it reached its crescendo Max spoke breathlessly, "I'm ready."

Lucas just stared at her for a moment, his brow slowly creasing in confusion that made Max want to roll her eyes in amusement that he hadn't caught on. "Huh?" he asked in bewilderment. "Ready for what? To continue the water balloon fight?"

Max snorted and shook her head gently, "Dustin was right. You and Wheeler are so dense."

Lucas huffed, "well what do you mean then?" he asked whilst a frown of impatience appeared on his features.

Max exhaled and then bit down on her lower lip watching Lucas's eyes intently for a moment. "I'm ready for us to...have sex." She said calmly clashing terribly with her heart which was hammering in her chest.

Lucas eyes widened comically, and he opened and closed his mouth numerous times before he could speak. "O-Oh that's...that's totally...tubular."

Max's face went deadpan, "did you seriously just say 'totally tubular' in response to me wanting to have sex with you?"

Lucas blushed, "*shit*, s-sorry I just panicked..."

Max frowned nervously, "are you not ready? Because if you're not, that's fine Lucas. Honestly, I can wait. I don't want you to *ever* feel pressured – "

"No! No, that's not it *at all*." Lucas snorted, shaking his head with amusement at the idea of him *not* wanting to have sex with Max. He had been hoping and wanting it for a while now, dreaming about it, wondering what it would feel like.

"Then what is it?" Max asked curiously, leaning her head more comfortably back against the white boarders.

Lucas sighed feeling slightly embarrassed. He bit his lip; his teeth nibbling down on the flesh as he tried to think about how to word his worries. He looked back at her blue eyes, seeing curiosity within them but no judgement. Lucas exhaled in defeat, knowing he couldn't lie to her about something so serious.

"What if I'm bad at it? What if...what if I hurt you?" he whispered in a panic, his heart stuttering and his stomach clenching with anxiety.

Max's eyes widened with surprise at Lucas's revelation, but she smiled softly at him which relieved some of the worries currently at battle inside of his mind.

"I might be bad at it too." Max finally said, smiling shyly as she shrugged her shoulders. "We both might be shit at it, but how else are we going to learn and improve?" she reasoned making Lucas chuckle softly.

"And about it hurting, yeah stalker it's probably gonna hurt like hell. I mean have you *seen* your dick?" She questioned teasingly making Lucas snort and blush all at once.

"Max," Lucas scolded playfully as he gently tucked some wet strands of red hair behind her ear.

Max grinned, "but seriously, we just have to go slow okay? You know I'll tell you if it's too much."

Lucas leaned his forehead against her own and sighed in agreement, nodding his head slightly. His eyes went to hers again and they both grinned at each other, feeling giddy and excited about their secret.

The moment was ruined by Dustin panting heavily as he raced around the corner screaming for reinforcement.

"El's finished sucking face with Mike and she's on the war path! Help! We *need* help!" He screamed before narrowly avoiding a pelted water balloon and running back into the yard.

Max and Lucas laughed, holding hands and sprinting to where their friends were all shouting, squealing and chuckling as they avoided or were hit by balloons.

Lucas gasped in shock as Max threw one of the small balls of water at him and it collided with his butt. He whirled around to see her bursting with laughter.

"Sorry," she giggled answering his betrayed face. "But I'm Team El all the way!" Lucas rolled his eyes and grabbed some more water balloons chasing after her and unable to hide the giddy grin from his face, knowing that soon, *very* soon him and Max would be closer than ever.

The first day of the camping trip had been more fun than Max ever expected. She had gone to the camping ground thinking only of the secret alone time she could have with Lucas, but instead she found that wasn't the only thing she was enjoying.

Playing games in the water with her friends, taking the piss out of Steve whenever the humidity messed with his hair and sitting around a fire toasting marshmallows and just acting silly with the people that meant the most to her.

But that didn't mean that the whole day wasn't gearing up with anticipation for Max and Lucas as they got closer to what they hoped would be their first time, if they could get away with sneaking around.

Everyone left for their tents that night, Lucas taking Max's hand and pulling her away from the others as they all said good night.

When they were a safe distance away from everyone else, Lucas took both of Max's hands in his, entwining their fingers and smiling shyly at her. "Um, are you still okay for me to come over to your tent?" he whispered nervously.

Max's glanced at their friends for a moment, all of them distracted with their own things. She looked back at her boyfriend and smiled bashfully, "yes, definitely. Just give it like fifteen minutes okay?"

Lucas nodded absentmindedly, "yeah that'll be enough time for Mike to fall asleep." He muttered more to himself than Max.

She smirked, "are you not telling him?" she asked slightly surprised.

Lucas chuckled and shook his head, "no. Obviously he'll find out eventually, but he'll keep me in the tent asking me questions if I tell him now."

Max grinned, "good point. Anyway, I'm sure he'll much prefer his wake-up call from El then from hearing what we're going to be doing." She teased but her heart hammered apprehensively at the thought that within the hour her and Lucas could be having sex.

Lucas snorted with humour and leaned forward, kissing Max's lips softly with a loving tenderness that made her instantly relax. His lips mouth to her forehead and he placed a chaste kiss against her skin and smiled, "I'll see you in fifteen minutes." He murmured.

Max exhaled, feeling giddy, nervous and excited. "See you in fifteen minutes." She promised, squeezing his hands before letting go and walking away slowly to her tent, turning back now and again to smile at her grinning boyfriend.

Max entered her and El's tent just as her best friend had changed into

her PJ's and she quickly realised that El had noticed the way her cheeks were flushed from the exchange with Lucas.

"You okay?" El asked as she brushed her curly hair and put it into a high messy bun.

Max nodded and bit her lip taking a deep breath. She worried that El would think she was moving too fast wanting to be with Lucas intimately and that she would be annoyed at having to leave the tent.

"I kind of need you to leave the tent El. Like for the night."

"What?" El laughed in surprise, whilst Max crossed her arms and rubbed at her skin nervously, wondering if she was going to have to go into detail or not.

"You're serious? Why?" El whispered.

Max exhaled deeply, but she couldn't help but smile as she thought about her boyfriend and how he made her feel. It was only natural to want to take things further. "Lucas is coming into this tent to spend the night with me. So can you sleep in Mike's tent?" She asked bravely.

El looked surprised and tentatively asked, "are you and Lucas..."

"We might do. But we're going to see where the night takes us." Max answered honestly, knowing that there wasn't any pressure between her and Lucas.

Max was so relieved when El slowly smiled warmly and then spoke, "okay then. Well I guess I best..." El said indicating that she should leave.

"If you don't mind." Max grinned.

El stood up and was about to leave when she turned to Max and engulfed her in a hug. She clung onto El for a moment, feeling like she needed a bit of courage. "Be safe and have a good time. And don't do anything you don't want to." El whispered.

Max chuckled and nodded against her embrace. "Don't worry El. And

I could say the same to you too."

El laughed and shook her head as they pulled out of their hug. "Oh, don't worry I don't think we'll be doing that tonight. Mike told my dad we'd behave." She said rolling her eyes in exasperation at her boyfriend.

Max scoffed, "yeah right. We'll see how long that lasts." El giggled and gave her best friend one more hug before leaving the tent.

The moment El had zipped the tent closed, Max turned to the sleeping bags and exhaled shakily. She went to her bag and pulled out the spare blanket she had brought. She lay it on the ground and then unzipped her sleeping bag, so it would cover her and Lucas. Just looking at the makeshift bed sent butterflies in her stomach.

The sound of the tent being unzipped again brought Max out of her nerves daze and she turned to see Lucas smiling sheepishly at her as he entered the tent and closed it behind him.

"I just saw El..." Lucas whispered with a slight grin as he turned to Max who was stood wringing her hands together.

"Did she threaten to beat your ass if you didn't treat me well?" Max asked breathlessly, a shy smile on her face.

Lucas chuckled quietly and nodded, "pretty much."

They both smiled at each other, averting their eyes around the tent, catching each other's gazes now and again and grinning like fools whilst their cheeks blushed.

It was like that for a while until Max finally huffed in annoyance, "why is it suddenly so *awkward*? It's not like we haven't seen each other naked before or even *done* things to each other."

Lucas bit his lip and took a step closer to Max, "I think it's just because we're...*nervous*. We need to relax." He reasoned, trying to steady his erratic heartbeat.

Max looked at him, relieved that he was calmer than she was. But then again Lucas was pretty laid back, he *had* to be to deal with her.

She smiled, her eyes lighting up as her fears started to fade. Sex might be a huge deal, but this was *Lucas*. It wasn't a body she didn't know. She loved Lucas's heart, soul and body because they were a part of what made him who he was.

Lucas took another step forward and finally they were right in front of each other, nothing but the very distant sound of crickets, their heartbeats and their apprehensive breaths to break through the silence of the night.

Max closed any more space between them by moving her hands slowly up Lucas's chest as his breath hitched, before wrapping her arms around his neck and pulling him down for a yearning kiss.

Their mouths moved beautifully together, fitting so perfectly as Lucas tilted his head and deepened the kiss. Every touch of their lips and tongues heated with a burning passion and breathy gasps that were filled with anticipation.

Lucas's hands moved up and down Max's back, clutching at her tank top and pulling her closer to his chest so that their hearts hammered in unison.

"I love you," Lucas panted, closing his eyes and licking his dry lips. Max kissed down his neck sending a shiver of desire down his spine as a delicious burning sensation built up in his body.

Max smiled against the strong column of his neck, her mouth wet on his beautiful skin. "I love you too." She whispered in a caress across the expanse of his shoulder making Lucas shudder.

He moved his hands to Max's cheeks, bringing her face up for another passionate kiss that filled her senses with overwhelming love and adoration. She gasped into his mouth and her hands glided down his torso until she found the hem of his shirt.

They pulled away enough to remove his pale blue shirt and then Lucas's hands were copying, moving to Max's hem eagerly and helping her to pull the yellow tank top off her body. This left her upper body covered only by a white bra which stood out in the darkness of the tent.

Max's blue eyes never left Lucas's dark pupil blown gaze as she reached back, unclipping her bra and slowly taking her arms out of the straps before dropping it onto the floor. Lucas's eyes went immediately to her chest and a groan of lust left his throat giving Max a rush of confidence at the way he was looking at her, like she was something to worship.

His hands reached for her, grabbing at her waist and pushing her against his hard chest. They both gasped at the wonderful sensation of skin against skin. Lucas looked down at her chest again and smiled, "you're so beautiful." He whispered as Max looked up at him and bit her lower lip, feeling so in love that it was overpowering her.

They locked lips again, starting to get consumed by their passion, their hands everywhere they could reach. Lucas's fingers gently caressing against Max's breasts making her whimper with need as her hand trailed down his stomach. She stroked him through his shorts making Lucas groan into her mouth and bucking his hips into her palm.

Max pulled away from his lips, her chest heaving as she reached down to unbutton her own shorts, just wanting to be naked already. Lucas got the point and copied, unzipping his pants and kicking them off his long legs.

For a moment they were only in their underwear, looking at each other with trust and love, exhaling deeply at the very private moment. They had seen each other naked more than once, but somehow this moment felt more intimate than any other.

Max stepped forward, her mouth pressed against Lucas's chest, feeling his beating heart underneath her lips as her fingers trailed down his sides and hooked into his boxers, pulling them down his thighs enough that they fell down his body.

Lucas stepped out of them, gulping nervously as Max's eyes widened with lust whilst her gaze lingered over his body in the most intimate caress. His body was shaking with adrenaline and excitement and he looked at her own shape, thinking she was the most beautiful woman in the world.

He leaned down kissing her neck, eliciting quiet moans and sweet whimpers out of Max's mouth as he moved down further, kissing and nibbling along her collarbones until he reached her breasts.

His hand came up to massage one breast whilst his mouth gave loving kisses to the other, his lips, tongue and teeth making Max keen and hold his head against her chest as her back arched into the amazing sensation he was giving her. He swapped his movements, giving equal attention to Max's breasts before moving down her stomach, leaving hot and wet kisses to the smooth skin of her abdomen whilst she shook with anticipation.

Max's hands went to Lucas's shoulders and she went from flinging her head back with pleasure to watching him go lower through heavily lidded eyes.

Lucas looked up at Max smiling bashfully, his heart thrumming against his ribcage as he slowly pulled her panties down her thighs and let them fall down her lean legs. Max kicked them off and then gasped in delight as Lucas moved his mouth to her heat.

Her fingers dug into his shoulders but he didn't care, too busy giving her pleasure and wanting her to relax. As Lucas enticed her heated core with sucks, licks and nibbles, Max moaned low and long, her eyes closing as she couldn't contain the desire he was adding to the fire deep in her belly.

Lucas's hands clutched at her thighs, his fingers delicate as they stroked against her pale skin whilst his mouth brought her closer and closer to the edge. It wasn't just Max who was panting and gasping in pleasure, the sounds and writhes he was eliciting from his girlfriend was making Lucas's erection hard as a rock. He loved seeing her like this, completely in the height of passion and completely *his*.

"Fuck," Max moaned through clenched teeth as she gripped tighter to Lucas's shoulders whilst her legs started to tremble. "*Lucas*," she gasped, her eyes snapping open as he nibbled at her one more time and pushed her off the cliff, her orgasm making her legs buckle but her boyfriend held her up as she whimpered and rode through her ecstasy like a wave.

When it was over Max panted trying to catch her breath as Lucas stumbled to his feet, a pleased smirk on his face before she lunged at him, her mouth dominating his making him groan loudly as their tongues met in a fierce battle.

Max broke the kiss as her lungs screamed for air. Her chest heaved, her body tingling with arousal as she stared at her gorgeous boyfriend. "No more playing. Let's do it." She told him breathlessly.

Lucas licked his lips and nodded his head frantically, allowing Max to grab his hand and pull him towards the make shift bed.

She slowly sat down on her knees first before shuffling the sleeping back to the side and laying down on the blanket. Max put her head up against the pillow and looked up at Lucas with a warm and trusting smile.

Lucas gulped, looking down at his girlfriend, completely naked and wanting *him*. It caused an overwhelming and powerful amount of love to wedge straight into his heart as he realised how lucky he was to have found her. To be able to call her his soul mate.

He carefully got down on his knees and crawled closer to Max, thankful that she had got on birth control a couple of months ago so that they didn't have to bother with condoms once they did start having sex.

Max reached for Lucas, her hands beckoning his. She laced their fingers together and heaved him forward so that he collapsed onto her body making them both grunt and then start laughing at the awkwardness of the moment.

Lucas readjusted himself so he was in between her legs and looking down at her body with wonder and awe. "You're honestly so beautiful Max." He told her tenderly, his eyes softening when he locked with the blue orbs that had his whole heart.

Max smiled in a way he had never seen before. It was vulnerable, like she really didn't *believe* that she was beautiful and yet there was comfort in her eyes too, calming Lucas for what was about to happen. Letting him know that it was okay, that she loved him. It was the

most beautiful sight he had ever seen.

Max reached up to stroke Lucas's cheek making him shut his eyes for a moment and lean his face into her loving touch. "I love you," she whispered into the serene night. "Now please...make me yours."

Lucas opened his eyes and stared into hers, smiling admiringly and nodded slowly. He was nervous and scared but more than anything he was ready. Ready to give Max all of his being, for her to leave an imprint on him for life and ready to leave an imprint on her. They were giving each other something that no one else would ever get. This moment couldn't have felt more special.

Lucas leaned down and kissed Max softly, their lips moving slowly for a moment as he adjusted himself and took a deep breath. "Are you ready?" he whispered, trying to swallow down some of his nerves.

Max nodded, her forehead bumping against his slightly. "Yes." She breathed out.

Max felt Lucas slowly enter her, his elbows either side of her head as their noses touched and their breaths hitched in unison.

It was the strangest sensation she had ever felt in her life, she squirmed at the tightness and pressure that she felt as Lucas tried to slowly move into her. She looked at his face, trying to control her own breathing as she watched the look of utter euphoria seep into all of his features.

Her teeth clenched together as he finally hilted, her muscles so tight around him and a searing burn slowly starting to ease but making beads of sweat erupt onto her brow.

Lucas exhaled deeply as if he had been holding in a breath from the moment he had entered her. His eyes searched Max's face and he frowned. "A-Are you okay?" he asked, his voice trembling from how *amazing* it felt to be inside of her.

"Y-Yeah," Max exhaled, only lying slightly. It did hurt, and it felt extremely odd to have such a full feeling. But at the same time, having Lucas's body pressing into hers, being one with him and *only*

him was incredible.

"Just tell me when to move," Lucas whispered, his body shaking from holding back the sensation to thrust into her centre, desperate to move and feel even more of her.

Max nodded and slowly drew out a breath as her body started to calm down from the invasion and adjust to having Lucas inside of her. She carefully shifted her legs, wrapping them around his hips and making her gasp and him groan as the action pulled him deeper.

They were both sweating and panting but Max felt ready for the next stage. "Okay," she whispered nodding almost frantically. "Y-You can move."

Lucas kissed her forehead softly and then slowly moved his hips back and forwards, causing a whimper to fall from both of their lips as he started to thrust and tried to find a rhythm. Their movements were stuttered at first, trying to find what worked best.

Max closed her eyes for a moment, breathing heavier as she sunk her head further into the pillow. It was feeling better, *much* better as Lucas's thrust made room for pleasure.

Her eyelids fluttered open and she smiled slowly, looking up at her boyfriend who was staring down at her. Their eyes met immediately, and he leaned down for a loving kiss, breathing heavily into her mouth and groaning as his hips picked up a bit of speed.

It was overwhelming, not just emotionally but physically. Lucas had never felt anything like it, nothing had come close and as he thrust into Max and looked down at her naked body, the way she licked her dry lips, the way her head flung back against the pillow and the way a sheen of sweat clung to her beautiful skin was too much.

He could feel the familiar heat rushing down to his dick and he tried to clear his mind, his head falling into the crook of Max's neck as he tried to ignore the sensation, but it was building quicker than ever before. Her warm and wet walls clenching so tightly around his erection as he bucked his hips, moving deeper was making him shake and not be able to think straight.

"M-Max," Lucas moaned, his vision already starting to go white. "I c-can't..."

Max moved his head from her neck and brought his lips to hers, "it's okay," she murmured against his lips. "It's okay."

Lucas moaned deeply into her mouth, the combination of her body and sweet words being too much as he thrust one more time, his hips rocking sloppily as he reached his orgasm, her name on his lips.

He collapsed against her chest, breathing hard whilst Max stroked his hair softly and kissed his forehead loving. When Lucas came around he leaned his head up, embarrassment flushed over his features and an apology in his eyes.

"I'm so sorry." He blurted out feeling mortified.

Max chuckled softly, the vibration of her body feeling so good against his. "It's okay Lucas. It's really, really common."

Lucas sighed, "I know...but I wanted you to..."

"It's okay." Max assured him, leaning forward slightly to press a soft and lingering kiss on his lips. "Next time," she smirked.

Lucas chuckled and kissed her again, his body filled with admiration and gratitude for the girl he loved above everyone else.

He balanced on one elbow and used the other to move tendrils of Max's hair away from her flushed face. "Are you okay? Did it hurt?" he whispered, his eyes full of care as he watched her eyes cautiously.

"It was a little uncomfortable at first." Max answered, her eyes reflective for a moment. "But it got better, I promise. And it'll get better the more we do it."

Lucas grinned, "well whenever you want to do it again. I'm game."

Max smiled, and Lucas chuckled, both of them kissing and then cuddling. Lucas not realising that his girlfriend took his words to heart and when she felt something hard poking her back fifteen minutes later when they were spooning, she turned in his hold and

smiled.

"You still game?" she teased.

Lucas smirked and then his lips were immediately on hers, hungry and eager.

They tried something new this time, Max carefully getting on top, her hands on Lucas's shoulders as he sat up. She found the rhythm that was best for her, her neck bent back and her eyes closed as she circled her hips and slowly lifted up and down.

Lucas carefully bucked up and Max gasped in utter euphoria when at a specific angle he found her G-Spot. They grinned mischievously at each other and then they were grinding and thrusting, sweating and moaning, gasping and calling each other's names.

When Max reached her orgasm, she wrapped her arms around Lucas's neck and collapsed her head into his shoulder, crying out for him as wave after wave of hot and passionate ecstasy rolled through her quivering body.

"Wow," Lucas gasped afterwards, helping Max off his lap as they crawled back into the makeshift bed. "That was way better than the first go." He said smiling sheepishly as he reached for the sleeping bag and covered his and Max's naked bodies.

Max giggled and snuggled up to him, her arm flung around his waist and her head on his heaving chest whilst Lucas wrapped his arms around Max's warm body.

"Yeah I've got to admit, that second time barely hurt and felt fucking amazing." Max said sighing happily as she listened to Lucas's racing heart.

He leaned down and kissed her sweaty forehead. "I love you Mad Max." Lucas whispered, the biggest smile on his face that he knew was going to be a permanent fixture if he could help it.

Max nuzzled her cheek against Lucas's skin and smiled brightly, her eyes so lit up with awe at what had just happened. "I love you too stalker." She said gently, her heart painful because of how full it felt.

They lay there for a while, in the darkness, soothed by each other's breathing and happy in their after-sex glow.

Max drew delicate circles against Lucas's abs and smiled softly to herself, thinking of how amazing it had been to finally have sex with him. She wanted to laugh at her own thoughts, because it wasn't sex was it?

It was the way he made her feel, it was the way he had always been there for her, it was the fact that he was her everything, that he knew everything about her and still loved her. How he accepted her stupid and frankly racist family, and that he still *wanted* her. They hadn't had sex, they had made love.

A tear fell gracefully down Max's cheek and landed onto Lucas's chest. He brought his hand immediately to her hair, stroking it soothingly. "Are you okay? What's wrong?" he asked tenderly, a slight worry etched in his words.

Max smiled to herself, knowing immediately that he was doubting his performance. It *definitely* wasn't that. She lifted her head so that she could look into his beautiful eyes.

"I'm just happy." Max whispered as more warm tears escaped her lower eyelashes. "You make me happy and I love you so much. There's no one else I would rather do this with. It's only you Lucas... it's *always* going to be you."

Lucas gaped, his eyes widened in wonder and surprise at her words. Max watched gently as his dark eyes filled with tears of love. He leaned forward and their foreheads touched, making them both sigh contently.

"It's always going to be you Max. *Always*." Lucas whispered, reaffirming their love in the most delicate way before they wrapped themselves in each other's embrace. They kissed lovingly and fell asleep, their faces inches apart, feeling more accepted and whole than they had ever felt before in their lives.

AN: Thank you for reading this I know it wasn't Mileven and I miss

them so much, so don't worry we've got Mileven moments coming up next. But I do hope you liked this, so please let me know what you thought!

Also, there's been a bit of interest in a chapter on how Dustin meets his wife Laura. Would anyone else be interested in that? If so, I'll add in another Missing Moment chapter for that to take place. I'll probably add Max and Lucas's wedding into that chapter so you can see Laura meeting the party for the first time too.

4. Missing Moment 4

The Life You Deserve Missing Moments

AN: We're back to Mileven! And trust me I needed to write about my favourite ship because the Mileven Depression is very real. :-(

Prompt: A Guest reviewer has requested the morning after Mike and El's first time. If you need any background, the Chapter you would want to read is *Chapter 29: Homecoming*.

Also a special thank you to all the Guests who leave reviews. I really wish there was a way to reply to you all, but I just want to thank you for your lovely comments! :-)

Missing Moment 4

November 1986

El was aware of a soft tickling sensation along her spine, like the brush of a feather, gentle and delicate. She smiled against the pillow that her face was currently pressed into and breathed in deeply, her body tired, spent and satisfied.

She giggled when she felt the tickles moving up her spine to her shoulder. El's eyes slowly fluttered open when she heard the soft chuckle of her favourite voice and she realised that the feather light touch was his warm lips, leaving delicate and loving kisses across her skin.

El rolled over and immediately caught sight of Mike. He was sat on the edge of the mattress, his hips against hers and beaming at her with so much happiness that it made her heart pound madly.

"Good morning beautiful," Mike grinned, looking like he didn't have a care in the world as he sat in his boxers and studied his girlfriend.

El felt her stomach swoop as she stared at Mike, taking in his messy post sex hair and his almost naked body. It was enough to cause a burning sensation to start deep inside her abdomen. She bit down on

her lower lip to try and suppress the crazy grin of contentment.

"Morning gorgeous," she smirked wiggling her eyebrows at him.

Mike laughed and knelt down on his hands to meet her lips in a loving and soft embrace. Their mouths moved serenely, fitting perfectly and send shots of electricity from their point of contact straight to their hearts.

Mike slowly pulled away enough to smile against El's lips and sigh peacefully. "I've made you breakfast." He whispered gently.

El's eyebrow raised and a playful smirk lifted her lips. "Eggos?" she asked in a hushed and hopeful voice.

Mike grinned and leaned back enough to look into her eyes. She smiled brightly when she saw how his dark amber orbs were filled with mirth. "Would it be anything else?" he teased making them both laugh.

Everything about that morning was perfect and El didn't think she had ever felt this happy or whole in her entire life. She knew that endorphins were still buzzing through her body after making love the night before, not once, or twice but three times. But El could tell this giddy and all-consuming feeling was going to last *days*, if not weeks. Because finally giving her body and receiving Mike's in return wasn't something you couldn't just *forget*.

Being intimate on this new level wasn't the only thing that had changed after making love. El felt a new connection with Mike, a new understanding about each other's bodies that made them both just want to worship each other.

It also made El feel self-assured in her naked self. Seeing the way Mike's eyes had roamed over her bare skin, how his lips had adored her body and the way his hips had moved with her own made her confidence soar.

Mike continued to pepper more kisses to El's face whilst she giggled, her heart fit to burst with love and adoration for this perfect man. Finally, he stood up saying the Eggo's would get cold and happily

held his hand out for El's.

When she went to grab her PJ's still tucked inside of her bag, Mike's hand clasped around her arm playfully. "Woah wait, what are you doing?"

El turned to him and saw the mischievous grin on his lips that made him look so damn cute that she could barely cope. "You want me to eat breakfast *completely* naked?" she asked him teasingly.

Mike blushed and bit his lip, but his eyes that fell down her naked body hungrily betrayed him. "W-Well..." He began, his stare currently on her chest, making El want to snort with amusement. "Would it be the worst thing?"

El shook her head smiling, "you're such a guy." Whilst Mike scoffed in indignation, she reached for his white button-down shirt from the night before and lifted it over her naked body. It was a lot bigger on her and the hem fell around her lower thighs.

She looked down at the shirt and chuckled realising that there were a few buttons missing here and there so that it gaped open around her chest and stomach. El knew she'd been a little forceful with getting Mike's shirt off last night, but she didn't think she'd be ruining his suit.

El looked up at Mike to find that he was smiling eagerly, his eyes trained on the gaping holes of the shirt. She wanted to laugh at his teenage boy ways, but she couldn't pretend that she didn't *like* his attention.

"Sorry about your shirt." El smiled softly causing Mike to finally blink and catch her gaze.

"Oh, it's okay," Mike said shrugging before closing the distance between them. His hands went to her hips and he pulled her in closer so that their chests brushed together. "Besides," Mike whispered as he leaned his head down and kissed the skin just below her ear, making El's toes curl from the lust his touch incited. "It looks better on you." He murmured against her ear, nibbling gently on her lobe and making a wave of pleasure rush down her body straight to the pit of

her stomach.

El's mouth opened slightly and her throat suddenly felt dry as she tried to blink and not look as dazed as she suddenly felt. Mike pulled back and smirked at her, that boyish grin making her melt on the spot.

"So...breakfast?" he teased, knowing *exactly* what he'd done to her.

"Uh y-yeah...yeah s-sounds, um good." El said breathlessly, stumbling over her words and her dry throat. She was suddenly parched and not entirely sure that water would do the trick.

Mike bit his lower lip to stop himself from chucking at her very obvious dazed moment and took her hand gently, tugging her along into the open plan kitchen/living room.

El was pleased to see that Mike had already set the table, a plate laden with Eggs in the centre with a bowl of strawberries covered in chocolate next to them.

"When did you do these?" El asked impressed as Mike held out the chair for her. She sat down, and he pushed in the chair, so she was a lot closer to the table.

"Yesterday morning," Mike said rather proudly as he sat opposite her.

El picked up a chocolate covered strawberry and brought it to her lips, her smirking lips touching the red fruit. "You are full of surprises Mr Wheeler." She said coyly as she bit into the strawberry whilst keeping her eyes locked on Mike's.

Her insides squirmed with desire at the lust filled hunger developing in Mike's dark eyes. It made her heart hammer against her chest and her fingers twitch, desperate to touch him. She settled instead for seductively rubbing her foot up and down his bare legs.

Mike grinned back wolfishly, enjoying her teasing and loving the way her foot was sending goose bumps and shivers across his skin.

They ate mainly in silence, content with just teasing and smiling giddily at one another as they consumed the large plate of Eggs.

Once they had eaten all of the waffles El moved from her seat and sat in Mike's lap. His arms wrapped around her waist, bringing her closer whilst she picked up a strawberry and fed it to him.

El's heart raced as she watched his white teeth sink into the flesh of the fruit and she gulped, feeling suddenly too warm for her own skin.

"Mmm," Mike said swallowing the strawberry and licking his lips slowly. "They're good." He said hypnotising El to stare at his mouth whilst he reached for another chocolate covered strawberry and brought it to her lips.

El grinned against the sweet fruit, nibbling into it and then sucking on the red juice as Mike watched through heavily lidded eyes. His heart beat almost audible as the hand around her waist tugged her flush to his chest.

She ate the rest of the fruit slowly, purposely savouring the taste as her and Mike remained in an intense gaze, their eyes full of meaning, darkening with lust and heating up with passion.

El licked the red juice off her fingers and smirked slightly when she watched Mike's adam's apple bob from the building tension. She lowered her fingers from her lips and moved forward, closing the small distance between them.

Their sweet-smelling breath lingered in the gap between their lips before their breaths hitched in unison as suddenly their lips were pressing together, their mouths opening as they both moaned in desire at the fruity taste on their tongues which stroked seductively together.

El wrapped her arms around Mike's neck and turned in his lap, adjusting herself so she was straddling him. His hands moved to her hips, gripping the bone firmly as he slid her closer, making them both groan at the delicious friction.

The tension built to boiling point as they ravished at each other's mouths, Mike's swollen lips leaving El's before he was nibbling and sucking on her neck whilst she arched her back and moaned as shocks of electricity and pleasure rippled through her body.

When it got to the point where El couldn't take it anymore, she pulled back enough to gasp for air, her chest panting as she stared at Mike through blown pupils. He was panting too, his lips looking so enticing and his eyes as dark as night.

"B-Bed." El gasped, "let's go back to bed."

Mike was breathing too heavily to speak but urgently nodded, helping El off his lap and holding tight onto her hand whilst she pulled her eagerly to the bedroom. The only thing to be heard from the living room for the next hour would be giggles, whispers, lips touching fervently and then the gasps and moans of two teenagers head over heels in love.

"Are you okay?" Mike frowned as he grabbed a few towels for him and El to shower. She had just leaned over to get the faucet on the right temperature and he noticed how she winced slightly.

"Yeah," she said smiling slightly as she looked over her shoulder at her boyfriend. "Just a little sore." She shrugged as if it was no big deal.

Mike on the other hand frowned, a wave of guilt and blame rippling through him. "El I'm so sorry."

El just chuckled and shook her head in amusement, "Mike please. We've done it like four times in less than 24 hours. I think it's normal to feel sore."

"But – "

"No buts." El said reprimanding her boyfriend who slumped slightly in defeat. "Now come and have a shower with me." She added with a sweet smile that immediately lifted Mike's mood.

He grinned and stepped into the tub with her, thoroughly enjoying getting her all soapy and lathering his hands all over her body. He wasn't sure which he preferred more, doing this to her or her doing it to him.

Once showered and clean, the couple got dressed talking about their plans for the rest of the day. Seeing as they were both meant to have

been at sleepovers, Mike was going to drop El off at Max's house before going to Lucas's.

He watched El pull out a blue sweater that was way too big for her and he couldn't help but smirk. "Excuse me Miss Hopper but I *believe* that is stolen property."

El blinked in confusion before looking down at the sweater as recognition reached her pretty eyes. She chuckled and shook her head, "nope sorry Mr Wheeler, but finders keepers." Her smirk was soon wiped from her face when Mike picked her up and spun her around making her squeal with glee.

When he finally put her down he rested his forehead against hers, grinning so dopily it was probably illegal. Their arms wrapped around each other as they sighed happily. "You keep it. I love seeing you in my sweaters." Mike whispered adoringly.

El beamed so brightly she thought she might actually be glowing. "I love you." She said softly, her words caressing against Mike's lips as she pressed her mouth to his.

"I love you too. So much." Mike hummed peacefully, closing his eyes for a moment and just breathing her in. He wanted to remember these last 24 hours for as long as he lived and maybe after that too.

Twenty minutes later Mike begrudgingly dropped El off outside of Max's house. The couple kissed loving, their lips lingering with a promise of forever that made El's heart whole and giddy.

"So...how was it?" Max asked knowingly as she sat on her desk chair with her legs crossed.

El was in a dream, the most faraway grin on her lips as she sank straight onto Max's bed with a loud sigh of happiness.

"Go on, I want *all* the details!" Max prompted teasingly.

But El wasn't listening, too consumed by her love, too filled with happiness and too preoccupied with breathless memories to take anything else in but the fact that she was *ridiculously* and *irrevocably* in love with Michael Wheeler.

AN: Okay no idea where the whole strawberry thing came from! Damn that fruit! At least they are one of your five a day I guess...lol

As always thank you so much for your feedback. It means everything to me and it's so fulfilling when writing to see what people thought. Lots of love to you all!

5. Missing Moment 5

The Life You Deserve Missing Moments

AN: We're now half way through the Missing Moments! All of these prompts have already been planned out, but I do try and squeeze in new prompts wherever I can. So if there is a scene you're desperate to read, just let me know :-)

This prompt was requested by *Elmerine* who wanted to see Hopper and Mike having a heart to heart after our sweet Mike isn't able to comfort El.

I've added this with another prompt requested by *Emma*, who wanted to see El talking to Joyce about losing her virginity.

This Missing Moment takes place a month after *Chapter 31: At Death's Door* when Terry sadly dies.

Warning: Angst but with some fluff!

Missing Moment 5

June 1987

The passenger window of the BMW was wound all the way down as El leaned back against her seat and watched the trees rush by in a stream of browns and greens as Mike drove her home from school. Their fingers were entwined by the central console and she closed her eyes, bobbing her head to the music on the radio whilst her long curls whipped around her face.

The party were a week away from finishing school for summer break and El had been counting down the days until their California road trip. It would be her first real vacation and Max had planned out activities including a day trip to Disneyland which El was impatiently waiting for.

It was just over a month since Terry's death and El found herself slowly healing. She knew it was a slow process and sometimes even

she couldn't understand how she could suddenly go from smiling to crying. This was another one of those moments.

A soft and dulcet tune started to play on the radio, the guitar strumming a song that made the hairs on El's arms stand up. It was so familiar and caused her heart to clench before the singing even began.

"The other night dear, as I lay sleeping, I dreamed I held you in my arms. But when I awoke dear, I was mistaken, so I hung my head and I cried..."

The chorus to 'You Are My Sunshine' started to play and El gasped as hot tears leaked down her cheeks.

Mike hearing her involuntary sound, turned his head from the road for a moment to see El crying, her chest heaving and her eyes squeezed tightly closed as she wept.

His eyes widened in horror and his own heart felt like it had been stabbed having to see her like this. "El," Mike breathed out softly in concern, as he checked his mirrors and pulled the car over to the side of the road.

Once the engine was off, Mike turned to El and tried to pull her into his arms, but she squirmed from his touch and moved closer to the window. His stomach clenched, and he tried to pretend that her rejection didn't kill him.

"El, El what's wrong?" He asked nervously, his fingers twitching as he wanted so badly to hold her and take away the pain.

"It h-hurts." El sobbed, her eyes still closed as she moved a hand over her heart.

Mike frowned and nodded his head sadly, "I know babe. I know it hurts..."

El opened her eyes and looked at him with frustration, "but you *don't* know Mike!" He couldn't help but flinch at her tone. "Y-Your mom is healthy and *alive* a-and I m-missed out on s-so much!"

The tears started to gather in Mike's eyes as his heart broke for his

girlfriend. He wanted to say the right thing, he wanted to take all of her pain away and make everything right. But he knew he couldn't, and she knew too.

"Just take me home please." El sniffled, wiping at her eyes and purposely avoiding his gaze.

Mike exhaled heavily but nodded in confirmation even though she wasn't looking at him. The rest of the car journey to her house was in silence, a strange tension in the air that he didn't know how to fix.

They rarely argued or disagreed about anything so having this odd prickling silence was killing Mike. He knew he should be quiet and just let her process her own emotions, but he couldn't stop his mind from blurting out words, desperate to make things right.

"I know you missed out on so much El, but...but your mama did get to see you do *some* things like um, like when we went over for your birthday a-and Becky brought her here." Mike said trying to sound optimistic, but he felt his positive was like a balloon on the edge of a sharp needle, just waiting to be burst.

"It's not the same." El murmured quietly, her face solemn as she continued to stare out at the wilderness.

Mike sighed, biting his lip in frustration and clenching his fists on the steering wheel. "I hate seeing you like this El," he whispered, slowly glancing at her. "Just...just tell me what I can do."

"You can't do anything Mike," El sniffled feebly, turning her red eyes onto him for a second before looking back at the window.

His chest tightened, and his soul sunk in defeat. Mike was the helper, he always had been his entire life. If it was El, or Will with the Mind Flayer or just stupid things like stopping arguments between Dustin and Lucas. There wasn't any issue he hadn't been able to find a solution too. But seeing El grieving and not knowing how to help was the worst one by far.

"El there's *got* to be something I can do." Mike insisted, too wrapped up in finding a solution to notice that El was start prickle. "Like we

could talk about it, maybe that will make you feel better. Or um, we can go on a drive. Or you can come back to mine and we can go in the blanket fort or if you want to go out for dinner – "

"Mike just stop!" El shouted in exasperation causing her boyfriend to blink and realise he had been rambling. He turned to El and saw she was frowning. "I just..." she sighed and closed her eyes, calming down slightly. "I just want to go home."

Mike sighed, "okay." He wasn't angry at her, he was angry at the fact that he couldn't find a solution and that she had to go through all of this in the first place. He would never be able to comprehend how El had been dealt such a horrible hand in life.

They finally made it to the house and as Mike was taking the keys out of the ignition, El was already getting out of the car, her bag on her back and walking forlornly up to the house. Mike frowned and scrambled to get all of his things, quickly catching up to her and following her into the house.

Hopper and Joyce were in the kitchen both leaning against the countertop and drinking coffee as they chatted about their day. They all knew Hopper should still be at work and was clearly having a quiet afternoon to be lounging around at home.

"Hey you two," Hopper called, not at all surprised that Mike had come into the house. It was a daily occurrence, unless he had to drop El off quickly before work.

What was different about this occasion was that neither of the teenagers answered, El was walking resolutely to her room with Mike hot on her tail looking frantic.

Just before her bedroom door, El turned to Mike making him almost stumble at how quickly he had to stop. Her eyes were wet and distant, and a sadness seemed to overwhelm her.

"Just...I need some alone time Mike." She mumbled, her eyes guilty as she saw the hurt in the dark amber orbs that she cherished.

"B-But.." Mike choked, his own emotions tightening his chest

painfully as El gave him a remorseful look, walked into her room and closed her bedroom door in front of him.

"What do you think he's done?" Hopper murmured quietly to Joyce, the rim of his coffee mug against his lips. "Do you think I need to get my gun out?" He added after hearing El saying she wanted some alone time. Hopper couldn't *ever* recall her wanting alone time from Michael freaking Wheeler, so it had to be pretty bad.

Joyce gave him an amused grin, "no honey I don't think you need to get your gun out. Maybe they're just having a little couple's spat." She reasoned.

But before they could do anymore guessing, Mike rounded the corner from the hallway and the smile on Joyce's face slid straight off, whilst Hopper found his chest clench slightly.

Mike had tears down his face and looked completely devastated. Hopper and Joyce shared a stunned look. *Shit, this must be really bad*, the chief couldn't help but think to himself as he looked at how defeated the teenage boy looked as he slowly trudged towards the front door.

"Mike sweetie, you don't have to leave!" Joyce called reproachfully.

Mike blinked and turned towards Hopper and Joyce for the first time, he didn't seem upset that they had clearly overheard him and El. In fact, he barely seemed bothered that they were even stood there.

"El doesn't want me here. I can't help her..." He mumbled as more tears slid down his face.

Hopper frowned and looked back at Joyce who gave him an encouraging stare. He sighed pushing up from the counter he was leaning on and turned to the deflated teenager. "Mike, let's go for a walk." He said gruffly, still holding onto his coffee mug and crossing into the living room.

Mike blinked in surprise and nervously looked at Hopper's holster. The chief noticed and snorted, "don't worry I'm not going to kill you."

He thought about his daughter's tears and glared slightly at the teenager. "Well, that depends on why El's so upset I guess."

Mike huffed and nodded, following Hopper out of the house and down the steps of the porch. The men walked in silence, Hopper leading the way into the forest knowing where he was going.

He led them to an area just off from the house that had a few broken trees here and there. Hopper sat down on a log and patted the wood indicating for Mike to sit next to him, which he begrudgingly did after a second of hesitation.

Hopper sipped at his hot coffee for a moment, appraising the area in front of him and thinking that it would make a nice clearing if he got rid of the broken logs and just cleared a few of the other overhanging trees.

There was a long silence, Mike had his head down and Hopper could tell by the occasional snuffle coming from the boy that he was still crying. He coughed feeling a bit awkward and kept his eyes on the trees in front of them.

"Spill Wheeler." Hopper finally said, unable to bare the silence a minute longer. "What happened?"

Mike wiped at his eyes whilst exhaling a shaky breath as if he was trying to put himself back together. "It's...it's about Terry I think." He finally mumbled in a croaky voice.

Hopper sighed and nodded slightly, not surprised that it would be about El's mama. After all it had been only a month since she had passed away and El was doing as best as she could with her grief. But clearly it had been taken out on Mike.

Out of nowhere Mike started to sob, his face in his hands and his whole body shaking. Hopper frowned, turning to the teenager and cautiously placing a strong hand on his bony shoulder.

"It just makes me s-so *mad* that I can't help her Hopper. I love her so much that sometimes I can't even think about anything else but her a-and then I think about *everything* she's b-been through a-and I can't

take it."

Hopper smiled sadly knowing exactly how Mike felt. If he could take all of the memories of the lab away from El then he would in a heartbeat. He would do anything for his girl and he knew Mike would too.

He stayed quiet, keeping a firm grip on Mike's shoulder so he knew he was there for him, but let him speak and get all of the pain out.

"She only n-now tells me stuff about the l-lab a-and it's just t-too *much*. I want to know what s-she went through but it just k-kills me. I don't know how she copes and I get so s-scared that I'm going to lose her again." Mike was shuddering from his emotions and his palms were soaked from his tears, but it was like a flood gate of emotions had been ripped open.

"A-And now she's p-pushing me away because she knows I can't h-help her and I don't know what to do!" Mike's voice was muffled in his hands, but Hopper could hear how frustrated and anguished he was.

He moved his hand onto Mike's back and rubbed it slowly in what he hoped was a comforting action. Hopper turned to look back at the scenery, his blue eyes following a bird leaving its nest.

"Has El ever told you about Sara?" Hopper asked quietly, his voice soft.

Mike slowly lifted his head out of his hands, his eyes were red and his cheeks were wet with tear stains. "She...she told me that Sara was your little girl and that she's gone now, that um she died." He said hesitantly, not wanting to anger or upset the chief.

Hopper looked out at the trees in contemplation. "El and Sara were quite similar you know. They both faced the worst that life throws at you, but they still smiled, and they still got on with it. They are both so strong."

Mike stayed quiet, fidgeting with his hands whilst he watched Hopper who didn't look upset more thoughtful about the heartache of

his past.

"They were both so brave, always have been. But people sometimes forget about everyone else, what it's like to watch someone you love go through such shit and not being able to do a damn thing about it."

Hopper sighed and turned to Mike, surprised to see that he had his full attention. "I can't tell you how helpless I felt just sitting there and watching Sara's health deteriorate. I would read to her and she would act so brave that it was like nothing was wrong sometimes. She smiled until the end." He said quietly, a raw ache in his heart as the jagged wound that Sara's death caused pulled slightly.

"And El is just as brave, she still smiles too Mike. Yeah, she has her bad days, which today clearly is. But you *know* she needs you, she couldn't make it more damn obvious or annoying how much she loves you." Hopper said with a slight smile, relieved to see the ghost of a grin on Mike's face.

"But you've got to remember that sometimes she needs you, but other times she's going to need me, or Joyce or *Maxine*." He smirked slightly, thinking of the red head who would be shooting daggers at him right now.

"Clearly this is a moment that she needs a different kind of comfort Mike. She's a smart girl, she'll seek out what she needs, but I can guarantee she'll *always* come back to you kid." Hopper said nudging Mike's shoulder and making him smile.

He frowned slightly thinking about the other things that the teenager had gotten off his chest. "You know it's healthy to cry right? To get it all out. Because kid, you've got a lot of shit on your shoulders too, you have since you were twelve. And you need to be honest with El, just talk to her about your fears and worries because I'm sure she has her own too."

Mike sighed and nodded, running his palm over his face to brush away the dried tears. "I know...you're right." He said breathlessly as he squared his shoulders and then exhaled a deep breath.

"Want to tell me I'm right again? Because it's got a nice ring to it."

Hopper teased whilst Mike chuckled sheepishly.

The chief hoisted himself off the log and held out a hand to help Mike up which he gladly took. Once the teenager was up he brushed down his jeans and then smiled at Hopper. "Thank you for um...for talking with me and letting me like...cry." Mike mumbled the last bit.

Hopper grinned and took a swig of his coffee, "that's okay kid. Now we best get back because I have a feeling El will kill me if I keep you away any longer."

The moment that El shut her bedroom door on Mike she threw her bag on the floor and collapsed onto her bed, sobbing into her pillow.

She was so heartbroken over her mama but also riddled with guilt and shame at how she had treated Mike. It frustrated her that she couldn't properly explain to him how she was feeling, but she knew that she shouldn't have ever snapped at him. He was the greatest light in her whole universe and always had been from the moment she met him.

El closed her eyes and let her tears fall, allowing it to slightly ease the pressure of her tight chest and the pain that it clutched to.

There was a soft knock at the bedroom door followed by a gentle voice, "El sweetie, can I come in?"

El sniffled and turned on her back, her fingers anxiously twisting together against her stomach. "Y-Yes." She called, her lower lip wobbling and her face drenched from tears.

Joyce opened the door and carefully entered the room, her hands laden with a mug of something clearly warm if the swirls of steam were anything to go by, a box of tissues and a packet of cookies.

El watched and wiped at her eyes as Joyce put down the steaming mug next to El on her bedside table and then got up on the bed with her step daughter, scooting up to the headboard so they were next to each other.

Joyce didn't say anything, simply opened up the cookies, took one for

herself and then offered them to El who immediately grabbed the crumbly chocolate chip cookie and nibbled on it. She moved closer to Joyce and slowly laid her head on her step mom's shoulder whilst she ate and sipped at her hot tea.

Joyce put her arm around El's shoulders and absentmindedly stroked her hair comfortingly whilst they ate quietly.

El couldn't explain why this moment was so comforting, just sitting there under Joyce's arm, having her hair stroked and eating cookies, but it caused a warmth in her chest that started to dissipate some of the pain away. El found herself able to speak her mind about what was really bothering her.

"Mama is going to miss out on my life," She whispered. "She will never see me graduate, or go to college, get married or...or have my own children."

Joyce didn't say a word, allowing El to get everything off her chest. But her hand continued to stroke her hair softly and she listened calmly.

"I just wanted to t-tell her things. *Important* things." El said sniffing slightly as a few tears escaped from her lower lashes.

Joyce grabbed one of the tissues and dabbed it gently against El's cheek. "She's *always* going to be listening sweetie. Why don't you say the things you wanted to tell her." She offered kindly, smiling tenderly at her step daughter.

El bit her lip and thought about all of the things that she would say to her mama about her life. "I...I want her to know that I'm getting straight A's and that I'm doing really well on the track team." She began anxiously, worried it was stupid to say these things out loud. But now that she had started, there was more things she wanted mama to know.

"I would want her to know that I was really scared when I got my first period, but you and Max were kind and helped me." El whispered whilst Joyce smiled slightly and squeezed her shoulder in support.

"I'd tell her that I had my first kiss when I was twelve and that I didn't know what it was, but it felt like...like the best thing *ever*." El said breathlessly, a small smile now on her lips.

She thought of other things and giggled warmly at one particular memory, "I would tell her about the first time me and Max waxed our legs, and how Max waxed a strip of dad's hair because he didn't think it hurt. And then he *screamed*."

El and Joyce laughed, "you know it never grew back properly, right?" her stepmom teased making the teenager giggle wickedly whilst she had her tears wiped away from her cheeks.

Both women smiled softly, El already feeling better for getting these confessions off her chest. "And I would tell mama about Mike. How happy he makes me, how he is really romantic and leaves little notes in my locker or gives me flowers and presents. I'd tell her how perfect Homecoming was, how we..."

El cleared her throat and looked down at her lap where she was wringing her hands together nervously. Joyce had stayed quiet but El knew she was watching her and waiting for what she was about to say.

She sighed and looked up at Joyce, El's hazel eyes took in the support and acceptance in her step mom's gaze and took a deep breath. "I'd tell her how we lost our virginity on Homecoming night and that it was perfect and so *special*." El whispered the words, only feeling slightly anxious about Joyce's reaction.

Joyce smiled softly, "I'm glad it was so special sweetie. You deserved that." She said surprising El who looked up at her step mom through wide eyes.

"Shouldn't you be...*mad*?" El asked quietly, a frown on her brow at the confusion that Joyce's reaction had caused.

Joyce chuckled, "oh sweetie, you and Mike have been together for a while now and I know how much you love each other. And I um, well I *know* that Mike got protection, so I suspected this moment would happen." She admitted smiling sheepishly whilst El blushed.

"It did hurt," El whispered looking down at her hands. "But only for a little bit and then it was...*wonderful*. I didn't think I could love Mike more, but it made us even closer and I think I love him much more now." She couldn't help the warm flush of her cheeks, but there was a sweet smile playing on her lips.

"That's because he's your special person sweetie." Joyce said grinning warmly.

El looked up at her and beamed, feeling so happy when she thought about Mike. But after a moment her mind was flooded by the memories of the last hour, the hurtful things she had said to him. Her stomach immediately clenched, and her heart ached.

"I was *so* mean to him Joyce. He's...he's g-going to *hate* me o-or leave me or – "

"Sweetie no!" Joyce said hushing El and rocking her gently while she cried. "Mike could *never* hate you El, it's not even possible." She laughed gently even at the notion of Mike hating El because it was just so silly. "He loves you honey. He's just devastated for you, but he does understand, I *promise* that he does. I think he's hurting too."

El sniffled and nodded, "he *is* hurting. I feel it." She choked out whilst her chin wobbled as a new set of warm tears weaved down her face. "And I j-just shut him out."

Joyce continued to soothe El and rock her, "it's going to be okay sweetie, when he comes back just explain how you're feeling and he'll understand. I *know* he will."

In the same moment the sound of the front door opening filled the space, and the gruff voice of Hopper and the nervous voice of Mike could be heard.

El gasped and immediately broke from Joyce's arms and raced out of her bedroom. Her step mom just chuckled gently and started to pick up the cookies and tissues.

Mike followed slowly behind Hopper into the house, feeling on edge

and nervous. What if El didn't want him there? Should he just go home?

He took in the silence for a moment and turned to Hopper, "maybe I should give her some space." He said quietly.

Hopper just chuckled and shook his head, "hear that?"

Mike frowned in confusion but then heard a loud thumping noise from down the hallway and looked up in surprise to see El rushing out of her room and running straight to him. He barely had time to gasp before she had flung herself into his arms. Her legs wrapping tightly around his waist and her arms crossed behind his neck. Mike would have fallen over if it wasn't for Hopper steadying him.

"I'm so sorry!" El sobbed as she placed lovingly kisses all over Mike's face. "So, so, sorry," she sniffled as she kissed his lips, then his cheeks, then his forehead and back to his lips.

Mike smiled against her lips, just relieved that she was feeling a bit better. "It's okay." He assured her, pulling back enough to look into her puffy eyes. "I love you and I'm sorry too, I shouldn't have pushed you."

El just smiled, her eyes so bright and thankful to have him back. She leaned in and kissed him enthusiastically, Mike responded just as eagerly, forgetting where he was for a moment. His arms wrapped around her waist and he pulled her closer, smiling into each loving kiss.

There was a loud clearing of a throat and Mike flinched realising they were still stood right next to Hopper. He gulped and slowly turned his head to see the chief stood there with his arms crossed and a warning glare on his face.

"S-Sorry..." Mike squeaked sheepishly.

"I'm not sorry." El countered proudly, beaming as she stared down at Mike who was turning red from her words and from Hopper's scrutinising eyes.

"Can I take Mike to my room?" El asked her father brightly whilst

Mike spluttered at the red glow on Hopper's face.

"Absolutely n – "

"Of course, you can sweetie, just keep the door open." Joyce's voice called softly as she came into the living room with the tissues, cookies and empty mug. When Hopper just gaped in indignation, Joyce smirked and patted his shoulder comfortingly before heading into the kitchen.

El clutched onto Mike's shoulders and slowly unwrapped her legs, bringing her feet back down to the floor. She took his hand and Mike's embarrassed face slowly started to soften into something much gentler as she led him away from Hopper and to her bedroom.

Joyce came out of the kitchen having washed up the cup and smiled up at her husband who was watching Mike and El's retreating forms. "Come watch some tv with me chief," she teased taking his hand and yanking him along.

Hopper sighed and followed his wife, watching her with a warm smile. "Do you know you're a great mom?" he asked her as they cuddled up on the couch.

Joyce turned to look at her husband and grinned, thinking of how he was with Jonathan, Will, El and even Mike. "You're a pretty great dad too Hop."

They both leaned in for a kiss, meeting in the middle and beamed as they laid their foreheads together.

"I love you Mrs Hopper," the chief sighed happily.

Joyce smiled warmly and kissed him again, "and I love *you* Mr Hopper."

Mike and El laid on her bed, Mike's arms securely around El whilst she lay her head on his chest, listening to the steady beat of his heart whilst he stroked her hair and kissed her forehead.

"I really am sorry for closing you out Mike." El whispered, drawing light circles on his stomach with her fingers.

"It's okay," he told her softly, nuzzling his nose against her hair and breathing her in, filling his senses with her beautiful scent that soothed his soul and calmed his heart. "And I'm sorry for trying to find a solution before I even let you talk. I know...I know that sometimes I won't have the answers and you might need your dad or Joyce or whoever else. But I want you to know I do want to help, even if I'm the last person you tell. I love you."

El lifted her chin on Mike's chest and smiled at him adoringly, taking in his gorgeous features and looking into his dark eyes which were filled with genuine love and strength. She leaned in and kissed his lips, her heart humming with happiness as fireworks erupted before her eyes.

"I love you too," She whispered against his lips, her mouth quirking into a grin at the dazed look on his face. "I promise we'll talk more about our feelings."

And so that afternoon instead of making out or taking advantage of their freedom in her bedroom, Mike and El just talked.

She explained about the void, how her mama had called her to it just before she had died and how she had sung '*You Are my Sunshine*' to her.

"That's why it affected you so much," Mike whispered with a knowing gasp.

El told him more about the lab, how she was hesitant to tell him about her past because she worried about how much it upset him. Mike couldn't help but be honest too, explaining that of course it upset him, but it was only because he loved her so much and *never* wanted her to be hurt.

Mike sighed, "but I want you to be able to share these things with me if you want to. I will *always* be there for you El and I know you'll be there for me if it all gets too much."

El smiled tenderly and they kissed, slow and lingering kisses that filled their hearts with love and warmth. Mike hugged El to his body and closed his eyes, feeling safe and complete just like this with her

in his arms.

And in that serene moment they fell asleep together, Hopper eventually coming into the bedroom to wake them up and send Mike home before his mom worried.

Instead of feeling anxious about leaving El, Mike felt a slight relief that if she was sad or upset, he knew that she had so many people that loved her and wanted to help too. It made his anxieties easier to bare and when he kissed her and waved goodbye, Mike *knew* that El was safe with parents who would do anything for her.

AN: I don't feel like this was very good :-/ But I know we can't be happy with everything we write!

Thank you for reading though, your support throughout TLYD and the Missing Moments has just been amazing :-)

6. Missing Moment 6

The Life You Deserve Missing Moments

AN: Hi all! I know it's been like three days since I wrote a Missing Moment chapter, but I swear it feels like longer.

I've added two prompts together for this Missing Moment. *Mileven* and *Guest* wanted to see Mike protecting El from a bully and *Betazoid4* wanted to see Mileven's first time without a condom.

So yes, you've guessed it, warning for **Smut**. If you're not into that kind of thing, just skip the last section of this chapter :-)

Missing Moment 6

June 1988

El watched on from the bleachers as Mike finished his final swim team practice of the semester. Her elbow was propped up on her thigh and her chin lay in the palm of her hand as she watched him with a small grin and awe filled eyes.

She couldn't get over how amazing Mike's body was, and seeing him swimming, seeing those shoulder blades move and his strong arms glide through the water was enough to make El melt into a puddle.

Her thighs squirmed slightly, and she absentmindedly squeezed them together as she watched Mike with a heavy sigh. It had been quite a few weeks since they had last had sex because she was now on the contraceptive pill and had followed the doctor's advice to make sure it would be effective.

But watching Mike was almost *too* much and the moment he got out of the water and she saw his full frame, she wanted to jump him in the shower that she knew he was about to go and take. Her fingers itched to rake over his wet skin and a heat was rapidly descending to her lower abdomen.

El coughed, trying to clear her mind and body of its dirty thoughts,

feeling like an out of control animal. It was comical in a way that she couldn't control herself around Mike. But perhaps it was the combination of not having had sex for a while and *finally* being able to do so again.

She couldn't help but be curious as to whether having sex for the first time without a condom would be different from normal. El knew that logically it would take a barrier away from their skin but surely it wouldn't feel *that* different?

El blinked and refocused when she realised Mike was looking up at her. She beamed at him, her heart fluttering as he smiled back, clutching his towel to his chest as he dried off. He gestured towards the locker room and El nodded in response knowing their routine by now.

Mike would shower and El would make her way to the front entrance of the locker room and wait for him to get dressed. It was a similar routine when Mike came to watch El's track and field practice.

El grabbed her bag and took her time getting down from the bleachers so she didn't trip but wanting to get out of the swimming pool room as soon as possible. It was always stiflingly hot in this room, the steam sticking to the windows and condensation dripping down in slow trickles. Plus, it kind of had that weird smell of chlorine and sweat in the air that El was happy to leave behind once she made it through the gym and waited in the hallway for Mike.

She flung her bag onto the floor and leaned back against the wall knowing that her boyfriend would be out soon, he never really took that long to get ready unlike her.

El couldn't help but be thankful that it was Friday. She bit her lower lip to suppress the excited grin that was quirked on her face at the thought of the date her and Mike were having Saturday night. They were going to have dinner and then head to Lovers Lake. El smirked knowing it was Mike's romantic way of them celebrating sex for the first time without a condom, because he was stupidly excited about that, but she was just eager to be intimate with him again. Nothing could compete to being one with Mike in a way that no one else would ever experience. It was beautiful, special and just *them*.

El was so distracted by her dreamy thoughts of Mike that she didn't hear oncoming heavy footsteps or the sniggers that died down at the sight of her.

"Well, well, well if it isn't the freak." Came a dark and dangerous sneer.

El looked up and frowned, watching one of her least favourite people walking down the hallway towards her with a look of malice, flagged by two other burly mouthbreathers. She immediately assumed that they must have been coming out of detention to be at the school this late.

"Troy." El spoke darkly, her eyes narrowing with hate. She remembered when she had first started high school, how Troy who soon recognised her when he noticed who she hung around with, quivered and stepped away from her terrified that she would hurt him again.

But over the years he had become a bit more daring, realising that El had rules to stick by now and had to be careful of exposure. He was a year older than the party and clearly with only two weeks left of his high school experience, he wanted to even the scores.

"Where's frog face? Not here to protect you?" Troy said in baby voice whilst the other two mouthbreathers sniggered as they all walked closer to El who had her arms crossed in a bored expression. "Aw sorry I forgot, *you* have to protect *him*. Because he's a weak widdle baby..." Troy pouted sarcastically whilst El's blood boiled.

She took a defiant step closer to him and her eyes darkened with hate. "Don't *ever* talk about him again." El warned through clenched teeth.

Troy's hardened expression flickered for a moment to fear but then he cleared his throat and glanced at his back up, smirking when he realised she couldn't expose herself.

"And what are you going to do huh?" Troy goaded her, closing the distance between them and making El cringe at how gross he smelt, his stale breath lingering on her face.

As she glared up at him, her jaw set and her fists clenched, she briefly wondered if he wanted her to attack him, so that others would witness her powers and she would be caught out. El huffed feeling frustrated that she couldn't intimidate him like she once could. It took a lot of willpower to give him one final look of disdain before picking up her bag to leave the hallway. Mike could find her by his car once he was dressed.

"Hey where the fuck do you think you're going?! Come back *now*!" Troy's voice bellowed down the hallway, but all El did was continue to walk and flip him off over her shoulder.

"I said come back here, you slutty little *bitch*!"

"What the *fuck* did you just call my girlfriend?" Came an incredulous and extremely angry voice that made El immediately whirl around.

Mike was stood by the entrance to the locker room, his bag hanging loosely from his left hand and his hair still damp and curling in that adorable way that El loved. His face was glowering with anger as he stared straight at Troy who turned around to face him with a sneer.

"I *said*, that your freak girlfriend is a *slutty little bitch*."

Mike dropped his bag and closed the gap between him and Troy, "yeah that's what I thought you said." He hissed through gritted teeth before unexpectedly swinging his arm back and bringing a heavy punch with his fist to Troy's face.

El gasped in surprise and Troy's two cronies yelled in anger trying to get to Mike, but El wouldn't let them move any closer, both of them confused why their feet were stuck to the floor.

Troy brought a hand to his cheek observing the blood there in shock. Mike was panting and wringing out his hand which clearly hurt if the graze on his knuckles was anything to go by.

"You have no idea how long I've wanted to do that." Mike glared and clenched his teeth looking at the pathetic bully. "You can call me loser or frog face, but don't you *ever* call my girlfriend a slut or a bitch or even *speak* to her ever again."

Troy blinked and came out of his stupor before his face convulsed in a scowl as he aimed a punch at Mike which he narrowly avoided by moving quickly to the side. El gaped in shock and quite frankly *awe*, as her boyfriend kned Troy in the gut and then delivered another punch to his face.

The bully sank to his knees and groaned in pain clutching at his stomach whilst his two mouthbreather acquaintances shared looks of surprise and fear before taking off down the hallway. El finally loosened her hold on them when it was clear they didn't want to attack Mike and just wanted to get the hell away from the couple.

She looked around making sure that the coast was clear before she walked over to Mike and Troy. Her boyfriend was now clutching tightly onto the bully's shirt and making him look up at him.

"Don't you *ever* speak to her again! Do you understand me you piece of shit? In return I won't tell her father, the chief of *police* the things you've been saying about his daughter. It wouldn't take much for him to accuse you of something Troy." Mike threatened, his voice so dark and dangerous that El couldn't hide the grin of excitement on her face by how his protective nature was kind of making her...well *horny*.

El knelt down and put a sickly-sweet smile on her face as Troy begrudgingly looked at her through cold eyes. "And just because I can't use my abilities on you in school, don't *ever* think you're safe mouthbreather. One wrong move on me, my boyfriend or any of my friends and you're dead. You hear me? I can find you wherever, *anywhere* in the world."

Okay so technically she wasn't going to waste her time on finding this stupid mouthbreather or killing him for that matter, but what was wrong with a good old threat to keep the bully away?

She smirked and glared at him for good measure, "you will *never* be safe..." She whispered in a haunting voice whilst inside she was laughing at how wide and fearful his eyes had gotten. El stood back up, proudly watching her boyfriend taking down the bully.

Mike stared at Troy, every single horrible memory since the 5th grade flashing through his mind. How Troy had bullied them all, hurt

them, gave Dustin a complex about his teeth for years, how he was racist to Lucas, how Will's self-esteem had taken a massive dive after the ridicule and now how he called El, beautiful and perfect El a bitch and a slut. Mike remembered how willing Troy had been to let him die, not bothering or regretting asking him to jump off a cliff to save one of his best friend's.

With that thought in mind Mike glared down at Troy, "here's one final reminder that we mean our threats." He delivered a final blow to the bully's stomach, kicking him once whilst Troy groaned and curled into a fetal position.

El entwined her fingers with Mike's and passed him his bag. They looked down at the bully and El couldn't help but smirk and give him a little wave as she pulled her boyfriend away. "Bye mouthbreather! Have fun graduating, you won't be missed around here."

And with that El dragged Mike along, both of them sharing a triumphant smile that after years and years of torture and battling, they had won the war.

Mike let El lead him down a few hallways, not necessarily paying attention to where they were going as he wrung out his hand, wincing slightly at the pain in his knuckles. He knew it was going to bruise but he couldn't stop the smile of triumph on his face at *finally* taking down Troy Harrington.

El came to an abrupt halt and was slightly panting as she turned to look up at Mike. "That was..." she began breathlessly, shaking her head in amazement. He couldn't help but beam with pride at the awe inspired look on her face as she took in his features. "That was *incredible* Mike. Where did you learn to do all of that? You kicked his ass."

Mike smiled bashfully and shrugged his shoulders, his eyes averting to the floor shyly for a moment. "Well it's down to Will really. Remember how he took those martial arts classes?" When El nodded in understanding Mike continued. "He told me he had a run in with Troy over Jen and that he punched him. So, I asked for a few tips and he showed me some moves. I never thought I'd actually get to *use*

them but – "

Mike's rambling words got caught in his throat as El lunged up at him, her fingers locking into his hair as she pulled his head down and kissed him full on the mouth. Mike inhaled through his nose sharply in surprise and then smiled against her lips, his arms wrapping around her waist as he deepened their kiss.

El's lips massaged against his, their hitched breaths mingling in a delicious sensation of lust as she gripped his hair tighter and made him groan into her mouth.

She pulled back slightly, her chest heaving and her eyes dilated as she stared up at him. Mike felt a mixture of desire and dizziness from the kiss and grinned dopily at his girlfriend.

"What you did," El whispered breathlessly, "was so hot."

Mike blushed with pleasure and his eyes drifted down to El's glistening lips. "Yeah?" he murmured, his heart pounding and his skin tingling.

"Yes," El smirked as she moved her hands out of his hair and grabbed his hand. "Come on." She said firmly hurrying them down the hallway whilst Mike laughed and clutched onto his bag with his free hand.

"Where are we going?" He asked in amusement, more than happy to be held captive by his sexy girlfriend. His eyes moved down to her pleated skirt and how it swayed from her swift steps, Mike gulped with anticipation thinking of how tomorrow night they would *finally* be together again.

He blinked in surprise when they reached the AV room and El focused on the door, unlocking it before ushering him quickly inside and locking the door behind them.

Mike dropped his bag and turned to El with confusion, "what – "

She jumped at him, her bag joining his on the floor as Mike caught El in his arms and returned her passionate kiss. Her hands went to his shoulders and she hoisted herself up so that her legs wrapped around

Mike's waist. He hurried to help her, his hands gripping her ass as their mouths opened against one another. He groaned as her tongue swept over his in a dizzying embrace whilst she pressed her body against his boiling front.

El gasped as she broke their kiss and Mike took the chance to bury his face in her neck, kissing and nipping at her soft skin and deeply inhaling her alluring scent.

"I want you," El panted, leaning her head back to give him better access. "Right *now*."

Mike pulled back from her neck to look up at her flushed face. His eyes darted nervously around the room, "right h-here? In the AV room?" he choked out in surprise.

El looked down at him and he gaped at how dark and lust filled her eyes had become. He felt it right down his body, the look in her gaze pushing blazes of fire straight to his groin. "Yes," she whispered before leaving lingering hot kisses against his face that made Mike's body tremble.

The studious part of Mike told him it was *not* a good idea to have sex on school property. But the nerd and teenage boy in him was screaming *fuck yeah!* The idea of having sex in the AV room was like every nerd's greatest fantasy. Well maybe except for Princess Leia's gold bikini. Mike smirked to himself as his mind flooded with memories of El bringing that certain fantasy to life. *Fuck she's hot.*

He had romantic plans for the first time they had sex without a condom, a surprise picnic on a blanket in front of the lake instead of dinner like she thought and then a boombox playing sweet music whilst they made love under the stars. That of course would still happen, but as Mike looked around the room and looked up at his aroused girlfriend he couldn't help but grin mischievously. *Yeah this is totally happening* right now.

He squeezed her ass and El moaned as Mike's mouth found hers again, their chests heaving as they shared breathless and steamy kisses. Their tongues fighting for control as Mike thrust his hips against El and groaned at the amazing sensations that were taking

over his body.

Mike walked them over to the nearest flat surface which just happened to be the table where he held their AV club meetings. A tiny ounce of guilt formed in the pit of his stomach over what Lucas, Dustin and Will would think of him having sex on their meeting table, but that was soon squashed by El panting and moaning into his mouth.

He pushed her onto the table and El sat on the edge whilst Mike stood between her legs and took her face in his hands. Their lips were swollen and sensitive which only made every movement of their mouths ten times better. Mike groaned and kept his eyes closed, just enjoying the feeling of El's tongue against his own whilst her hands moved under his shirt and raked at his stomach.

Mike eventually pulled away to assist in taking off his shirt and then his eager hands moved to El's fitted shirt, his eyes getting hungry as her blue lacy bra came into view.

"Fuck, you're so beautiful." Mike whispered as he stared at his girlfriend through blown pupils. He couldn't understand what he, Michael Edward Wheeler president of the AV club had done to deserve a girl like El. Not only was she smart, brave, funny and sweet, she was the most *beautiful* woman he had ever seen. And she was *his*.

El beamed up at him, her hands soft and gentle on his chest as she looked into his eyes. "You're so sweet," she breathed out in a happy sigh. "Now fuck me."

Mike spluttered at her abrupt words and he wanted to giggle like a happy fool at the smirk on her face, but instead he focused on kissing her senselessly.

El moaned into his mouth and her hands moved down from his chest, ghosting over his abdomen and the muscles there before reaching his pants. Mike groaned and kissed El with a needy desire as she unbuckled his belt and pulled it off.

Mike's hands moved up El's silky thighs and his fingers found the

edge of her panties, tugging at them and dragging them down her legs whilst she reached back with her hands and unclipped her bra.

He watched through heavily lidded eyes as she slowly took her arms out of the straps and then let the bra fall to the floor next to her panties. El reached for Mike and he crawled half on top of her, making her lay back on the table as their lips crashed together with a burning passion. Her hands were on the expanse of his back and Mike moved his mouth down to her neck and collarbones before paying his undivided attention to her breasts.

El moaned loudly and leaned her head back against the cold table as Mike took one breast in his mouth, his tongue swirling over her nipple whilst he cupped the other breast in his hand, kneading it gently whilst El writhed underneath him.

She keened and arched her back offering herself to him. "P-Please Mike," El gasped, her eyes desperate with lust. "I need you."

Mike groaned against her chest, her words going straight to his already rock hard erection. He nodded breathlessly against her heaving chest and then reached down to unbutton his pants.

He stood back up to shove his pants and boxers down but when El went to push down her skirt, Mike caught her hand and smiled bashfully. "Keep it on, it's hot."

El looked up at him and grinned playfully, biting her plump lower lip to contain her lust. In one fluid motion she turned around on the table and moved onto her hands and knees. She crossed her arms against the table and placed her head on top of them before lowering her body slightly.

Mike gaped in lusty awe at El, his animalistic passion bubbling over the surface when she looked at him over her shoulder and quirked an eyebrow teasingly. Her eyes filled with burning desire and Mike couldn't help the groan that ripped from his chest. He had to have her, *right now*.

His hands eagerly gripped at her hips and he pulled her down the table towards him, his heart hammering and his erection desperate

and needy for her. Mike was breathing heavily as he lined himself up and entered her hot and wet core, making them both gasp out loud in relief and rippling passion.

"Holy fuck," Mike panted, his eyes squeezed shut as he slowly moved his hips forward and back in a building rhythm. He had only just entered her and yet he already felt so close to the edge. Mike expected it to feel different without a condom but this was just *incredible*.

He was feeling her in a way he never had before, and as Mike started to really move he groaned loudly whilst El whimpered and moaned at the spine tingling sensation of their skin on skin. It seemed to hit every nerve in their bodies not just physically but spiritually. There was no barrier between them now and Mike didn't think he ever wanted that to change.

"It f-feels so g-good," El moaned breathlessly as she buried her face into her crossed arms and arched her back, her hips grinded against Mike, making them both groan in pleasure.

He couldn't resist going faster, pounding into El whilst she keened and eagerly met his thrusts. Mike's fingers gripped at her skirt covered hips and he bent down leaving sloppy and needy kisses down her spine whilst he sped up his movements.

"I love you," he murmured breathlessly against her dewy skin whilst El moaned loudly, her body trembling from the building fire.

"I love you too," El gasped as Mike slid one of his hands across her hip bone and moved his fingers under her skirt and down to her clit whilst he continued to pound into her. He loved the sounds she made and how her body jolted against the cool surface.

"Y-Yes, yes Mike!" El cried out as she writhed under his dominating hold and bit her lip, moaning deeply as he stimulated her clit whilst thrusting passionately into her.

It was all too much for Mike, touching her so intimately, pounding into her, gripping her ass and hearing the most sinful sounds coming out of her mouth. "F-Fuck El," Mike panted as he clenched his teeth

and squeezed his eyes shut. "I c-can't last much l-longer..."

El was moaning, too caught up in her own ecstasy so Mike doubled his efforts, rubbing at her and pounding into her with an animalistic pleasure as she shouted out and he felt her walls clench tightly around him. Mike groaned at the sensation and started to see stars as El whimpered and was hit by her orgasm.

Mike soon followed, her gasps and moans of pure pleasure whilst her hot and wet walls clamped down on him sent him over the edge. "El!" He choked in desire before collapsing onto her back and convulsing slightly with the aftershocks of his intense orgasm.

They were both panting for a while trying to get their breath back whilst Mike leaned on his hands, so he didn't crush El. He left adoring kisses on her back, his heart trembling with love and adrenaline.

"Wow," El gasped from underneath him and Mike couldn't help but grin at her breathless voice. "That was just...wow."

Mike chuckled, his whole body relaxed as he finally pulled away and helped El to sit up. He smiled like the fool in love he was as he pulled up his boxers and pants. "It was amazing." He whispered before leaning in and kissing El's lips sweetly, wanting his gratitude to be felt.

After Mike passed El her panties and her shirt, they dressed quietly but with matching smirks on their faces. Once Mike had his shirt on he settled back into the cradle of El's legs and pulled her close to him where she nestled her head against his chest.

Mike smiled happily and kissed her forehead before nuzzling his nose into her locks and wrapped his arms around her contently.

"I didn't expect it to be *that* different without a condom." El's voice was slightly muffled as she tucked her face into his shirt and breathed him in serenely.

"I know," Mike couldn't help but chuckle as he shook his head gently in amazement. "It just felt so fucking good. And I don't know but I just felt *closer* to you. I know technically we were closer because we

didn't have the condom. But like spiritually as well. If that makes sense..." Mike mumbled sheepishly.

El lifted her head from his chest, her eyes bright and happy as she stared at him with a soft smile. "I understand." She whispered before he leaned down and kissed her again, their joint love flowing beautifully through their veins.

Mike helped El down from the table and they cleaned up, giggling at having had sex in the club room and feeling giddy and happy. They snuck out of the AV room, El checking the coast was clear of the janitor before locking the door once more and taking Mike's offered hand.

Their fingers laced together, and they bumped each other's shoulders playfully as they walked slowly down the hallway and beamed at each other.

"So...if I beat up Troy a second time, can we sex on school grounds again?" Mike asked, half joking and half eager with honesty.

El snorted and grinned at him as they reached the doors leading out to the parking lot. "You don't need to beat up *anyone* for us to have sex on school grounds again..." she teased, giving him a mischievous wink that made Mike's eyes widen, his mouth drop open and the familiar fire to stir once more.

She let go of his hand and ran towards his car, looking back over her shoulder playfully whilst he chased her. Both of them laughing loudly when Mike finally caught El and wrapped his arms around her waist.

He beamed at her, taking in her happy grin and her bright eyes. "You are going to be the death of me Miss Hopper." Mike choked out.

El giggled softly and leaned up to press a tender kiss to his swollen lips. "I know." She teased making Mike smirk before taking her hand and leading her to his car. As he drove he looked down at his bruised knuckles that were now aching and swelling and smirked happily to himself. *Totally worth it.*

Well, well, well the horny devils. No flat surface is safe!

P.S Thank you to everyone who has read my new story Part of Your World! It will be updating tomorrow :-)

7. Missing Moment 7

The Life You Deserve Missing Moments

AN: Okay so after *Jorge*, *OTTSTF* and *Emma* have all mentioned what it would be like if Mike and El were caught in the act, I had this idea about a little bonus scene that I just had to write. It's only small but I hope you like it

After the bonus scene is the actual Missing Moment that I was supposed to be writing lol The prompt was by Andy who wanted to see Mike and El babysitting. Enjoy!

Bonus Scene

"This party meeting is in session." Dustin began as he sat down at the D&D table and faced the rest of the group. Max and Lucas were grumbling at having been called over, Will and Jen looked curious and Mike and El were both staring down at the floor with flushed cheeks and hair that was *definitely* out of place.

Dustin cleared his throat and looked around at the party members, his eyes lingering on Mike and El for a moment. "This meeting has been called due to a *major* breaking of the party rules."

"It's not one of the rules..." Mike muttered, his gaze down at the floor.

"Well it should be!" Dustin argued. "You disrespected *sacred* ground!"

Mike flushed red and looked like he had genuine remorse whilst El sighed heavily and rolled her eyes like a child who had been told off.

"Okay what's going on?" Lucas finally asked after there was an awkward silence between Dustin, Mike and El.

"Oh Lucas, if only you *knew*..." Dustin groaned dramatically as he wiped a hand over his face.

"Well why don't you just tell us then shit head? That's the reason why we're here *right*?" Max asks, irritated that she was missing out on a

movie with Lucas over *this*.

Dustin threw a glare at Max before clearing his throat and looking around the table solemnly. "It was a cold winter's day on 6th December..." he begins gravely whilst Mike shook his head in exasperation at the fact that it was *still* the 6th December and El huffed with impatience.

"I had to finish drama club early because Louise Jenkins puked all over her costume because of her stage fright. Which is crazy when you think about it. Why join drama club if you have *stage fright*?"

"Dustin? Can you get on with the story?" Will prompted, a small amused smile on his face as he watched Dustin shake his head as if to clear his distractions.

"Sorry, I shall continue. *Anyway*, I had a bit of time to kill before Steve picked me up and I decided it would be nice to go and hang out in the AV room for a bit. You know, go on the computers, play with the radio...use the room for what's it's actually *meant* for." Dustin scowled with the last words and glared at Mike and El.

"But as I approached the door I heard heavy breathing..." He added with a sigh whilst the accused couple squirmed, and Max's eyes widened as she realised what he was getting at. She crossed her arms and smirked, watching Mike and El become increasingly more embarrassed.

"Concerned that someone was sick or hurt I opened the door. But what I found only made *me* ill. You see when I looked into the room –

"

"Oh for god's sake!" El shouted in exasperation, throwing her arms up in the air whilst Mike winced and the others looked at her in confusion. She exhaled deeply and looked around at her friends, avoiding her stepbrother's gaze. "Dustin caught me and Mike having sex."

There was a beat of silence before everyone exploded.

"El!" Mike pleaded, his embarrassment too much to bare as he

covered his red face in his hands.

"Hey! That was my story!" Dustin whined.

"The AV room?" Lucas asked, his eyebrow raised sceptically as he looked between Mike and El.

"Ha! You horny bastards." Max smirked gleefully.

"Oh...okay," Jen grinned, her own cheeks blushing bashfully as she stared down at the table.

"You had sex with my *sister* in the AV room?!" Will shouted at his best friend in disgust.

El coughed awkwardly, looking down at the D&D table before slowly nodding her head to confirm the news to her horrified brother. She could practically feel him shuddering.

"But that wasn't all." Dustin whispered seriously as he looked around at the party again for effect. "They were totally doing it on the table. *Our* table!"

"Dustin!" Mike hissed in warning, "just stop."

"Hey! You're not the one who has to live with the image of seeing two of his best friends naked and doing it on the table!"

That soon sobered Mike up who bit his lower lip in embarrassment and slumped his shoulders in defeat.

"Yeah well, you interrupted us." El huffed crossing her arms. "We didn't even get to finish..." she added remorsefully whilst Lucas and Max burst out laughing and Will flinched like he'd been burnt.

"The point is that you both broke party rules and you have to be punished." Dustin said sitting up straight as he looked around at Mike and El.

"Oh *please*," Max snorted, "Wheeler's right. Not being able to have sex in the AV room *isn't* a rule!"

"Well it should be," Dustin piped up defiantly. "It's holy ground. It would be like having sex in Castle Byers," Jen and Will instantly blushed and averted their eyes. "Or the arcade," Lucas and Max smirked at each other. "Or worse, the *D&D* table!" Mike coughed awkwardly and El bit her lip to suppress her grin.

"Okay, okay...well why don't we make a new rule that no one can have sex on party grounds?" Lucas reasoned looking around at his friends.

Max raised her eyebrow and smiled coyly at her boyfriend whilst her hand moved up his thigh under the table. He almost jolted at her sneaky movement. "Are you *sure* you want to make that rule?" she asked him sweetly, fluttering her eyelashes.

Lucas blushed, "erm...m-maybe it shouldn't be a rule..."

"Oh come on!" Dustin called, shaking his head in disapproval at how quickly Lucas caved. He heaved a sigh and looked at the others. "Should we vote on it?"

When there was general murmur of agreement, Dustin cleared his throat. "All in favour of a new rule *clearly* stating that no one can have sex on party grounds?"

Dustin raised his hand, followed begrudgingly by Will and Jen. Max, Lucas and El resolutely kept their hands down, so it was all down to Mike. Dustin stared at the Paladin, seeing the nervous sweat on his brow.

Mike sighed and under the pressure and the embarrassment of being caught having sex, he sheepishly raised his hand into the air.

"Yes! Majority rules!" Dustin called happily.

Mike nervously glanced at El who was shooting daggers at him. He coughed feeling flustered and hot and looked back down at the ground.

"Okay well all in favour of Wheeler and El not being punished seeing as this shitty rule was only just passed?" Max asked, her eyes darting around the room as if she dared anyone to defy her. Thankfully all

hands immediately raised into the air, including Dustin's even if it was a second or two behind everyone else's.

"Right, I guess that matter is cleared up then." Dustin said cheerfully, giving the party his signature smile.

"Thank god," Mike muttered before turning to El and reaching for her hand. She allowed him to entwine their fingers, but she was still glaring at him for allowing the rule to be passed. He gave her his best puppy dog eyes and pout and shuffled closer to her, "I'm sorry." He said sweetly, smiling gently.

El watched his lips break into the smile that always melted her into a puddle and she sighed, annoyed that he could just turn her into a sappy love-sick fool when she was trying to be pissed off at him. "It's okay," she exhaled before leaning forward and kissing his ear lobe before whispering, "besides, we can explore other places to have sex now..."

Mike spluttered and turned red, but he couldn't help the giddy grin that spread on his face as he squeezed her hand. El beamed back and Mike felt his heart fluttering madly. *She's perfect.*

"So, out of curiosity, how long have you been having sex in the AV room?" Max asked smirking at the blushing couple.

"About six months," El admitted with a shrug of her shoulders. She smiled sheepishly when her friends all chuckled, with the exception of Will who merely shuddered.

"And Dustin," Max asked turning to her friend and fighting off her mischievous grin. "What was it like to see one of your oldest friends butt naked? And going at it on the AV table?"

Mike choked and Dustin shivered, "it was similar to what I imagine seeing your parents naked and going at it like rabbits would feel like. I think I will be scarred for life..."

The rest of the party laughed, Mike had his head back in his hands whilst El rubbed his back gently in support.

The sound of the basement door opened, and the group looked up to

see Maggie walking down the stairs. "Sorry I'm late guys," she said breathlessly, lugging her gym bag with her. "What did I miss?"

Max laughed, "oh nothing. Just Dustin catching Mike and El having sex in the AV room..."

Maggie looked between El and Mike and chuckled gently, shaking her head. "I'm not surprised," she teased looking between the blushing couple. She shrugged her shoulders nonchalantly, "me and Dustin are just lucky *we* never got caught."

The eyes of the whole party were suddenly on Dustin who was now bright red and gasping. "Er...w-we...um..."

"*You* had sex in the AV room?!" Mike shouted in exasperation.

"I...I can explain..." Dustin said sheepishly. But he never got to explain as the whole party were on him, pummelling him with pillows whilst he yelped and tried to get away from the attack.

It turned into a full-on war, the party running into the back yard and into Mirkwood, super coms were soon involved as they split into two teams and tried to catch one another. It was a sentiment to their youth that no matter how intense things could get in their romantic relationships, they would *always* be best friends and act stupid and silly together.

Missing Moment 7

November 1989

"Okay so if you try Danny with the mashed carrot and give him the stewed apple *only* if he doesn't eat the carrot." Becky said in a rush as she fiddled with putting in a long earring whilst El nodded and wrote down some notes on her paper.

"Right okay that's fine," she muttered as she scribbled her own instructions before looking back up at her aunty. "What about the breast milk?"

"I've expressed three bottles, they're in the fridge. Do you have the

instructions about heating them up?" Becky asked as she put in her other earring.

"Yep," El smiled happily before glancing over to where Joel was holding 6-month-old Danny in the living room and laughing with Mike about something that happened on the Thanksgiving float two days ago.

Mike and El had a week off from college and after spending Thanksgiving between her parents and Mike's parents, they had come to visit Becky and Joel, allowing them to have a rare date night whilst they babysat Danny.

"If you start getting him ready for bed around seven, hopefully he'll be down for you by eight." Becky said as she grabbed her purse.

"It's going to be fine Becky," El chuckled as she watched her aunty flapping about trying to stuff her lipstick and compact mirror into her large black purse.

Becky looked up at El, reaching up to touch her cheek affectionately. "I know sweetie. You and Mike will do a great job, I'm just sad about leaving him. You'll understand when you have your own babies."

El tried to hide the blush creeping up her cheeks at the idea of hers and Mike's children. She looked over at her boyfriend and sighed quietly, wondering if their babies would have his dark locks or her brown curls, his amber eyes or her hazel ones. It was an endless possibility and El felt her heart tingle at the thought.

Becky scooped up Danny from Joel's arms and peppered kisses all over her gurgling baby boy's face. "Be good for Jane and Mike okay?" she said softly to him, leaning her forehead against his whilst he stared straight into her eyes fascinated and smiled.

"Da-da," Danny squeaked making El and Mike gasp in surprise.

"Has he been saying that for long?" Mike asked curiously.

Joel laughed, "like two weeks. But we don't think he knows what it means, he's just repeating what he's heard us say."

"He can say ma-ma too, but it's the same thing. Sometimes he says it to me and I get excited and think he understands, and then he goes and says ma-ma at the television or the fridge." Becky chuckled affectionately, her eyes back on her baby who was bouncing energetically on her hip.

"We best get going honey if we want to make our reservations," Joel spoke looking down at his watch. Becky nodded and bit her lip, carefully passing Danny over to El.

He was content in her arms until he realised his parents were walking away. Danny started to whimper, and his lower lip quivered in the most adorable way.

"It's okay," El soothed him whilst she bounced him on her hip. "They'll be back soon."

"Don't worry if he cries Jane," Becky called whilst Joel helped her into her dress coat. "He's being really clingy at the moment. He'll calm down once we're gone."

El nodded and stroked Danny's short honey locks which were starting to curl at the ends. Mike put his arm around El and waved at the couple, "have a good time guys."

"Thanks Mike," Joel and Becky said in unison before entwining their hands and waving, leaving through the kitchen door. The sound of Becky's heels could be heard clipping down the hallway and then they were gone.

"Ma-ma," Danny cried, a little needy noise escaping his throat as he clutched out with little fingers.

El and Mike glanced at each other for a minute, a look of '*shit, what do we do?*' passing between them.

"Here," Mike said reaching out, "pass him over, I've got an idea."

El hesitantly passed over Danny, admiring his cute white baby grow with the bright yellow ducks on it before he was held beneath Mike's palms.

She watched as her boyfriend brought her baby cousin's face up to his and grinned at him, "want to hear a song?" When Danny stopped crying and stared at Mike curiously, he started to sing, "old MacDonald had a farm, E-I-E-I-O. And on his farm he had a cow, E-I-E-I-O. With a moo-moo here and a moo-moo there..."

With every animal noise that Mike made Danny giggled loudly, his eyes bright and his gummy mouth open showing a few little teeth that had come through.

At one point Mike ran out of animals to think of and turned to El who smirked, "Demogorgon?"

Mike gave her a deadpan look whilst El giggled, unable to help how happy he made her. He huffed and turned back to Danny's expectant little face. "Okay um...and on his farm he had a Demogorgon. E-I-E-I-O. With a screech-screech here and a screech-screech there..."

El had tears of mirth in her eyes at the strange noises of the Demogorgon that Mike was creating whilst amusing her cousin. Danny loved it, jolting up and down in his arms whilst he tried to remember other nursery rhymes that he had sang to Holly when she was a baby.

Whilst Mike sang songs to Danny and sat him on his hip, El pottered around the kitchen warming up Danny's mashed carrots, blowing on it until it was cool enough for him to eat.

"That looks disgusting." Mike commented when El sat down on the couch with the bowl of orange mash.

"Well he's started weaning and that's what he's meant to have." She reasoned whilst stirring the carrots.

Mike wrinkled his nose, "well *I* wouldn't eat them."

El rolled her eyes in amusement, "pass me Danny. I'll hold him, and you can feed him."

Begrudgingly Mike handed over the baby to El, where he sat happily against her chest whilst a repulsed Mike took the bland mashed carrots from her and scooped some onto a baby spoon.

"I'm sorry to do this to you young apprentice. But I guess we all started off with shit like this..."

"*Language* Mike." El warned making her boyfriend blush before he offered the spoonful to Danny who just stared at it, his eyes wide as he took in the orange squishy food.

His little hand came up to touch it and Mike just got the spoon back in time before it went everywhere. "Okay, maybe a different approach." The Paladin hummed to himself whilst El watched on in amusement as he pretended the spoon was a spaceship. "And here comes the Millennium Falcon!"

Danny who had been giggling at Mike obediently opened his mouth and then his cute little face immediately scrunched up as the taste of the bland carrot mash hit his throat.

"He doesn't like it." Mike stated, looking up at El who sighed.

"Well of course he's not going to *like* it. It's bland and squishy. But we've got to try him with it, I told Becky we would. And it's good for him." She said shrugging before tickling Danny's belly and making him chuckle.

"Okay," Mike sighed hesitantly before doing the same trick with the spoon. Danny once again opened his mouth and then crumpled up his face in revolt.

"Sorry but I'm not forcing the little guy to eat this." Mike said putting the bowl on the coffee table and jumping up, rushing to the kitchen.

"*Mike*," El called exasperated. When he came back in with the strewn apples, she rolled her eyes and smirked in amusement. "You're such a pushover."

Mike grinned whilst feeding Danny who was more than happy to eat the sweet dessert. "And you're mean to your cousin."

"Am not!"

"Are to!"

"You're acting like a child," El laughed shaking her head.

"If I'm a child then what does that make you?" Mike teased, pulling his tongue out at her as Danny continued to successfully eat some dinner.

"Oh my *god* Michael," El chuckled, wrapping her arms around Danny's tummy and kissing his head of miniature honey locks.

Dinner went by as successfully as it could with a 6-month-old baby. Danny ate his stewed apples but got it in his hair, all over his face and on his baby grow. When he squirmed impatiently he kicked out with his feet and caught the bowl of mashed carrots, bringing it crashing down onto the carpet.

El and Mike gaped at each other before snorting in amusement and nerves at the mess on the floor. "I'll clean it up once he's fed," Mike chuckled before putting the spoon to Danny's open mouth.

True to his word Mike got on his hands and knees, grimacing as he scrubbed the carpet whilst El cleaned up Danny and changed him into his pyjamas.

"You're so cute!" El cooed as she leaned over her baby cousin and blew raspberries on his tummy whilst he giggled loudly and wriggled on the couch where he was lying down on his changing mat.

Mike looked up from the carpet and pouted, "cuter than *me*?"

El looked up at her boyfriend in his needy and handsome glory and she smiled, her eyes bright and happy. "No one's cuter than *you* baby."

Mike grinned and seemed to have a bounce in his step as he picked up the cleaning spray and scrubbing brush and put them back in the kitchen.

El ordered a pizza for her and Mike with the money Becky had left them whilst her boyfriend lay on the carpet with Danny who was having tummy time. He had started to commando crawl and Mike who was slightly startled at how quick he was, hurriedly crawled after him.

El was positive she had ordered the wrong pizza, too distracted by watching her boyfriend and baby cousin. She was melting right there in the living room and would soon be a puddle if Mike didn't stop being so god damn *attractive*.

She put the phone down after ordering the food and carried on watching the two boys until Mike caught her eye and smirked, "are you checking me out?"

"N-No!" El spluttered, her cheeks turning red at being caught.

Mike chuckled and scooped up a squirming and smiley Danny. He walked over to her, and the image of him smiling that dazzlingly lopsided smirk whilst holding a baby in his arms was just...*wow*.

I want his babies. I want his babies. . !

El tried to clear her mind whilst Mike grinned and bent down to kiss her lips softly. He winced and had to pull away as Danny had clung to a lock of his hair with curiosity and was tugging it with his little fist.

The couple laughed and El smiled, her stomach fluttering with butterflies as she gently helped Mike release his hair out of Danny's grip. She stared up at her boyfriend looking into those expansive dark amber eyes that sent her heart into a flurry of madness and made her breath quicken. "I love you."

Mike's eyes filled with warmth in response and he pressed a kiss to her forehead, murmuring his words there. "I love you too."

An hour later and it was Mike's turn to change Danny's diaper. "Please don't pee on, please don't pee on me..." He chanted as he tried to change the diaper quickly whilst leaning away from Danny who was wiggling his legs in the air.

El just snorted with laughter and watched on as Mike worked so fast that he was mostly a blur. He sighed with relief when he put the two sticky tabs in place and lifted his hands in the air in victory.

"You're the most adorable nerd that ever lived." El grinned, her eyes filled with adoration as she watched her goofy boyfriend.

Mike laughed and closed the poppers on Danny's pyjamas. "The most adorable nerd that you *totally* wanna have a baby with." He teased, winking at El whilst picking up Danny and bringing him to his chest.

El gaped for a moment but then slowly smiled, "you might be right there." She answered back playfully and was pleased when she saw the blush that crept up Mike's cheekbones in response.

The pizza arrived, and the couple curled up on the couch eating ravenously whilst Danny enjoyed some time in his jumperoo and squealed as he played with the jingly toys.

"I could get used to this," Mike said quietly as he picked at the toppings on the pizza that they didn't usually order.

"Used to what?" El asked before taking a bite of her crust.

Mike looked up at her and smiled almost shyly, it made El's heart stutter. "*This*. You know, me, you and...and a baby. I want a baby with you."

El almost choked on her crust but managed to chew it quickly and swallow before answering breathlessly. "*Now?!"*

Mike laughed and shook his head gently, "not right *now*. But like...I don't know, I'd like to think that in the next ten years we've had at least *one* baby already."

El couldn't help but smile brightly, her heart so full of a ludicrous amount of love for her soul mate. "I want that too," she promised him. "I want it all with you Mike."

He grinned and leaned in quickly, eagerly kissing her lips, their mouths slanted and for a moment El forgot about *everything* until Danny gurgled and she remember that they were meant to be babysitting. They broke apart and smiled knowingly at one another.

"I'm gonna go heat up his bottle," El sighed happily whilst Mike nodded and pressed a chaste kiss to her cheek. She practically skipped to the kitchen, feeling giddy and light.

She didn't think she had been as happy as she lay back on the couch

cradled between Mike's legs, with her head against his chest and him playing with her hair whilst she fed Danny his bottle and rocked him gently.

His eyes took in Mike and El, watching them as they watched him with warm smiles. He drank his warm milk, the gentle sway of the rocking and the comfort of a quiet rendition of *'Twinkle Twinkle Little Star'* from Mike sending him off to sleep.

After a while El kissed Danny's soft forehead and got up from the couch, Mike following her up to his nursery. She placed him carefully in his crib and tucked him in.

El leaned against his crib and stared down at the sleeping baby whilst Mike wrapped his arms around her waist and propped his chin on her shoulder.

"I bet you looked like Danny does when you were a baby," Mike whispered before placing a tender kiss on El's cheek making her smile.

"I do think about it sometimes," she admitted quietly, keeping her eyes on her cousin.

"Does it bother you that he's in what was meant to be your nursery?" Mike asked gently, a slight frown on his brow as he waited for her answer.

El's eyes moved from Danny and she gazed around the room in front of her. It was blue now with a border of wallpaper animals and different furniture, with a few of the same items from her own nursery like the rocking chair and warm lamp.

"No, it doesn't bother me." El finally said, turning her head slightly so she could look into Mike's eyes. "I'm just happy that there is happiness and laughter in this house again."

Mike watched her, his eyes brightening with a mixture of sadness and love. He leaned in and kissed her lips tenderly, lingering a moment longer than usual, giving her strength through his healing touch. "You are amazing El Hopper." He whispered against her lips.

El smiled, her lips making Mike's quirk up too. "You're not too bad yourself Mike Wheeler."

He chuckled quietly and kissed her again, the couple readjusted so that they were embracing, taking a moment just to be connected and resonate the love, safety and warm that they felt in the arms of one another. It was a feeling that they both knew would never be as powerful in someone else's arms. It was a secret and a feeling that only *they* got to share.

AN: So I think we've established that El wants Mike's babies! And he wants them too! Ah I'm overloading on fluff here, but I need some Mileven fluff in my life. I hope you liked it and the bonus scene!

I'm off to order a pizza, poor Danny with his crappy baby food!

8. Missing Moment 8

The Life You Deserve Missing Moments

AN: This prompt is for *SnowMione17* who wanted to see Mike and El celebrating Valentine's day with the return of a certain bikini ;-) But I've added a few surprises and I hope you don't mind *SnowMione17*!

I've placed this chapter during their freshman year of college. If you want a bit of background, then read TLYD *Chapter 42: The College Years*.

So, as it's the last **smut** chapter of Missing Moments I've gone a bit crazy!

Also, The Life You Deserve won BEST ROMANCE STORY in the fanfiction Stranger Things Levoes awards! AHHH! Thank you so much to everyone who read TLYD. I love you all. Your comments and reviews have lifted my spirits more than you'll ever know. :-)

Missing Moment 8

February 1990

Mike lay on his bed in his dorm room, a pad of paper sitting on his lap as he occasionally scribbled down notes and focused on the movie playing on his small television set.

The sound of the door handle turning gained Mike's attention and his eyes widened in a wild panic as he tried to hastily locate the television remote and turn off the movie before Brian came in.

"Hey Mike, Dean wants to know if you want to come and play D& – " Brian blinked assessing the scene in front of him.

Mike was looking at him with a mortified expression, a pillow hanging in the air from where he held it up and the television set playing music from what Brian was pretty sure was *Dirty Dancing*.

Mike's cheeks were flaming red as he grabbed the remote from under

the pillow and quickly turned off the television. Brian cleared his throat, moving over to his own bed and trying not to smile too much. "So, um, you like Dirty Dancing huh?"

The Paladin groaned and hit his heated face with the pad of paper. "It's not what it looks like, I wasn't *watching* it...I was making notes..." Mike mumbled as he closed the notepad and tucked it into the draw of his bedside table.

Brian nodded, a curious smirk on his face, but before he could say anything Mike interrupted him, clearly intent on changing the subject. "Just checking, are you still okay with staying clear of the dorm room this weekend?"

"Yes sir, I will not be anywhere *near* this room." Brian said seriously before saluting Mike who snorted. "Dean said I can sleep on his floor and we're going to have a movie marathon."

"Thanks man. I just...well you know, want to spend time with El..." Mike trailed off, his cheeks blushing as he averted his eyes from his roommate.

"Are you two going to have sex?!" Brian asked eagerly, sitting further up his bed and resting his back against the wall.

Mike gave the red head a deadpan look, "dude it's Valentine's day and I'm going to have my girlfriend here all weekend. What do *you* think?"

"Technically Valentine's day was Wednesday..." Brian pointed out.

"Yeah I know," Mike shrugged nonchalantly. "And we couldn't be together as we both had late classes. But I still sent her flowers, chocolates and stuff."

"Jesus," Brian said shaking his head in amazement. "I don't think I could afford to be a boyfriend even if a girl *was* interested in me." He scoffed and smiled, "not that any girls *are* interested!"

"Don't put yourself down dude," Mike said with a slight grin. "You just haven't found the right girl, but you will...I promise."

Brian grinned, "there's got to be *some* girl out there who would want to date Brian the Wizard!"

Mike groaned and got up from his bed, "seriously man stop calling yourself that."

"What it's true! Or do I need to show you those card tricks again?!"

Mike just laughed and left the dorm room with Brian who was still talking avidly about his wizardry skills as they made their way to Dean's dorm to play D&D.

Whilst the game was fun, and Mike enjoyed taking a break from being the Dungeon Master, he couldn't take his mind off El. She was arriving tomorrow for their weekend together and Mike smiled to himself, wondering what they would get up to and when he would be able to give her the surprise he had been working on...

El hauled her bag up the stairs of the dorm, cursing the elevator for not working by the time she had panted to Mike's door.

She knocked and within a second the door was thrust open and her boyfriend appeared, a happy and relieved grin on his face. "El," he exhaled before his arms wrapped enthusiastically around her waist and pulled her up into a rousingly passionate kiss, making her bag drop to the floor.

El's squeak of surprise was lost against Mike's mouth and she hummed in contentment, her arms locking behind his strong neck as she returned the kiss with vigour, their lips tugging at one another, not able to get enough of being connected once more.

Mike spun them around and dropped El onto his bed whilst she giggled at his eagerness and bounced on the mattress. In a flash he was on top of her, kissing down her neck and making her breath hitch.

El bit down on her lower lip in pleasure, tilting her head back to give him better access whilst running her hands up and down the expanse of his back. His lips were moving feverishly, leaving hot and lust

filled kisses against her warm skin as he deeply inhaled her scent.

"I've missed you," Mike murmured against the crook of her neck, his breath hot and heavy, causing tingles of pleasure to ripple down El's body and pool deep in her abdomen. "So much," he groaned as his tongue and teeth teased her skin and made her whimper.

"I've missed you too, so badly." El moaned as Mike's hands traced down the curves of her body, his fingers slipping under her sweater, well actually *his* sweater that she had stolen on her last visit.

El's fingers moved into Mike's soft dark locks and she gripped them tightly causing him to groan loudly against her throat before nibbling her skin affectionately. She raised her face slightly, her eyes heavily lidded before something caught her eye and she snorted.

"What?" Mike asked, lifting his face from her neck. El felt a shiver of excitement run down her spine from how dark his eyes were and how husky his voice had become. *Fuck he's hot.*

"The d-door," El struggled to say as she tried to calm her breathing. "And my bag."

Mike frowned and turned his head to see that in his eagerness he had left the door wide open whilst El's bag was still in the corridor where it had been left when he picked her up.

"Oh," Mike said laughing sheepishly as he pulled off El and got up from the bed. She watched as her boyfriend stumbled across the room and grabbed her bag, placing it on his desk chair before shutting and locking the bedroom door.

He turned around, his back against the door as he smirked at El. She grinned back mischievously, her eyes flicking down his body and her pupils dilating when she realised how much he already wanted her.

Her hazel eyes, lust filled and dark met Mike's and she sat up, pulling her sweater and tank top over her head and chucking them on the floor so she was sat in her black lace bra.

Mike's eyes were burning as they slowly lowered to her chest, a groan escaped his chest and he licked his lips.

"Come here," El whispered seductively, giving her boyfriend a smirk of confidence from the way he was looking at her. No one could make her feel as beautiful, attractive or desired like Mike could.

His eyes were fire as he locked in an intense stare with her before pulling off his own sweater and unbuttoning his jeans, kicking them off so he was left in his tight boxers. El's shoulders heaved with every panting breath as Mike closed the distance between them, crawling up her body and capturing her mouth in an all-consuming kiss.

In a frenzy of lust and building tension the rest of their clothing soon came off, so there was nothing more between them. Nothing but gasps, moans and intense waves of desire as they took each other to a state of ecstasy and pleasure.

Afterwards they lay in bed together, a tangle of naked limbs and panting as El clung onto Mike's arm that was thrown over her stomach whilst he peppered gentle and loving kisses to her temple.

El's eyes flickered up to Mike's face and she smiled softly, taking in his beautiful constellation of freckles, high cheek bones, rosy lips and his dark glittery eyes.

"What?" he asked chuckling delicately as his warm eyes danced over her own features, curious by her adoring stare.

"You're just so handsome." El sighed happily before leaning up to kiss Mike's lips lovingly, lingering as she savoured the feeling of his full lips against her own. "And you're all mine."

Mike grinned against her lips, his hand coming up to cup her face whilst his thumb stroked gently across her jaw line. "I will always be yours and you will always be mine," he whispered. His eyes full of love as he took El in. "You are the most beautiful woman in the whole world, I love you so much."

El beamed, as she always did when in Mike's presence. His soul was so pure and beautiful to her, *everything* about him made her glow with happiness, acceptance and warmth. He was her soulmate, her best friend, her lover and her home.

"I love you too Mike, forever."

Mike's eyes lit up and then he was kissing her again, bringing them both back into their heightened desire. But this time, El pulled away giggling, her eyes moving to the clock on his bedside table. "Babe, we've got to get ready for dinner."

In response to her statement Mike groaned and his face fell against her chest. El couldn't help but laugh and wrapped her arms around her boyfriend, happily stroking his hair and leaving light kissing against his forehead.

"I don't know why you're being like this," El teased. "*You* are the one who booked the restaurant and said we should dress up all formal. I'm going to need *at least* three hours..."

Mike grumbled and raised his head so that he could look into El's eyes. She tried not to grin too much at the pout on his beautiful lips. "I know I've planned it all, but I want to stay in bed with my very hot naked girlfriend." He whined whilst El giggled.

"Come on, it's going to be fun," She said smiling at him adoringly because he was too cute to handle. El's lips quirked into a mischievous smirk, "besides, I need to go and *shower*..."

"I'll escort you!" Mike immediately blurted out, getting off the bed so quickly that El burst out laughing. She watched in amusement as he chucked on some clothes and then passed her his dressing gown.

El happily scooted out of the bed and wrapped the warm material around her petite body. Mike grabbed a few towels and his wash bag before grinning giddily at his girlfriend and grabbing her hand, "come on, let's get showered. I need to make sure you don't fall or anything. I'm doing this for your safety."

The corridor was filled with El's laughter as she was pulled along to the shower stall, smiling at her boyfriend until laughs and grins soon turned into moans and biting lips.

"You're staring again," El playfully chastised Mike as he held open the

passenger door of his car for her.

"S-Sorry," Mike stammered, not feeling sorry in the slightest. El looked *gorgeous* in a red and white polka dot dress with thin straps that fell just above the knee. She had coupled the dress with white heels and a small white sweater that was flung over her shoulders. Her curly hair had been swept up into a neat bun and she just looked breath taking.

They were going to a classy Italian restaurant not far from the college called Il Fornaio that Mike had picked out after wanting to take El somewhere fancy for Valentine's day. He had looked over the menu two months ago and made sure to budget enough money so she could order whatever she wanted.

Once El was safely in the car, Mike hurried to his side and got in with a happy sigh, his eyes glancing over at his girlfriend again, unable to comprehend how she was so beautiful inside and out.

El turned and caught Mike looking again, but she smiled sweetly, leaning forward to trace her fingers down his white button up shirt. "You look so handsome," she said grinning bashfully whilst her eyes took in his black slacks and suit jacket.

"Well I had to look the part," Mike teased whilst putting on his seat belt and pulling away from the parking lot behind the dormitory building.

El gave him a warm smile before turning her attention to the radio, her delicate fingers finding the channel she liked. "How long will it take us to get there?" she asked curiously, her eyes still on the radio.

"Only like six minutes," Mike said keeping his eyes ahead as he joined onto the main road.

El seemed content with that and sat back, bobbing her head to the music whilst her hand rested on Mike's thigh. With his free hand he intertwined their fingers, gently stroking the soft skin on the back of her hand with his thumb whilst they had a light conversation about college.

"Wow it's so pretty," El awed as Mike pulled her along gently into the Italian restaurant that had majestic white columns, gold painted walls and a burgundy tiled floor. There was gentle music playing, candles on each table, flowers on display and a high arched roof that made the restaurant feel bigger than it actually was.

But for Mike it was the rich aromatic smell coming from the kitchen that made him eager to be seated. The host greeted them welcomingly and found Mike's booking, escorting them over to a table for two, tucked slightly away from the others just as he had requested.

Mike knew El still wasn't a fan of being in large crowds if she could help it, and he wanted the evening to be relaxing and romantic for her, not filled with anxiety.

"Cheers," Mike said as he chinked his glass of water with El's whilst they waited for the waiter to bring their ordered drinks.

"Cheers baby," El chuckled before taking a sip of her water and carefully placing her glass down next to her cutlery.

"Isn't it crazy to think that we could legally drink when we were in London and Paris?" Mike said shaking his head in amazement as he reached for El's hand, their fingers immediately locking in a gentle hold.

"I know," El grinned, her eyes thoughtful for a moment as she clearly reflected on their happy memories of travelling. "I'd like to go back. Especially to Paris, it was so romantic."

Mike smiled understandingly, not able to take his eyes off El and how stunning she looked. His heart fluttered happily, and he had to resist the urge to sigh from how peaceful he felt. "Maybe we could go there again at some point, maybe, um, for like a honeymoon?"

El's eyebrows peaked in interest and she smiled giddily leaning in slightly, "honeymoon huh?" Her tone was light and playful but Mike's cheeks still blushed. She didn't know about his savings account, and how every month he added cash to her engagement ring fund.

He couldn't help but grin back at her, drawn in by the light in her eyes and the happiness in her smile. "Yeah honeymoon. You know it's going to happen at some point." Mike chuckled.

"I should hope so," El teased, but before Mike could respond, the waiter had returned with their drinks and they placed their food order.

"I can't believe you brought me here," El said looking around the restaurant, her eyes sparkling from the warm lights and distracting Mike as butterflies swarmed into his stomach. She leaned in again, making him do the same, their magnetic force bringing them closer.

"It's so expensive Mike. Will you let me give you some money towards it?"

Mike blinked and shook his head resolutely, "no El this is *your* Valentine's gift."

El sighed and reached her free hand up to stroke Mike's cheek, making a shiver of love escape his heart. "But you already got me flowers *and* chocolates."

"So?" Mike interrupted before El could rant about it being unfair. He brought their joined hands up to his lips, kissing her skin softly and then smiling against her knuckles. "I love you and I want to spoil you. Is that so wrong?"

El beamed, clearly unable to help it despite her reservations about him spending money on her. "Dad said you spoil me too much," she said grinning, her eyes locked on Mike's.

He just shrugged in response, a playful smile on his lips. "I like spoiling you babe. You deserve it."

El blushed and bit her lower lip whilst Mike's dark amber eyes flickered to her mouth before gazing into her eyes once more. "I mean if you think I am spoiling you too much, I can just stop – "

"No!" She exclaimed making them both laugh warmly. El sighed and looked down at their joined hands, playing with Mike's fingers delicately for a while whilst he watched her lovingly.

"I do feel bad sometimes, that you spoil me so much and I don't really spoil you," El muttered more to herself than Mike. Her gaze slowly left their joined hands and her focus moved to her boyfriend's eyes, smirking teasingly. "But I am sure you can think of ways that I can make it up to you..."

Mike's cheeks blushed, and his throat became increasingly dry. "Er y-yeah, I'm sure there's a few things..." he trailed off bashfully whilst El smiled coyly at him, looking at him underneath fluttering eyelashes.

The food arrived, momentarily distracting them both from their flirting as they ate pasta and talked about how much they missed Karen's cooking.

"I don't understand why she didn't teach me to cook before we left for college," Mike commented whilst twirling a spaghetti strand around his fork.

"She taught *me* a few things," El reasoned before popping a piece of ravioli stained red from the spicy tomato sauce into her mouth.

Mike gave El a flat look that made her giggle whilst she chewed her pasta. "And how does that help *me* Miss Hopper?"

El shrugged, swallowing the ravioli and grinning at her boyfriend. "I didn't say anything about it helping *you*." She teased whilst Mike rolled his eyes playfully.

"Before we live together I think we should take a cookery course," El said as she reached for her drink. Mike nodded eating his pasta for a moment and contemplating what she said.

"Yeah that would be a good idea," he finally commented. "Like when you're a registered nurse you'll work long hours and I'd like to know you can come home to a nice meal cooked by me, instead of Eggos or Ramen noodles..."

"There's nothing wrong with Eggos," El stated pointing her fork at Mike who snorted.

"I regret the day that I introduced you to those damn waffles," he muttered, a grin on his face when El looked affronted. She kicked

him lightly under the table and Mike laughed, feeling so happy being in her presence, wishing she never had to go back to San Francisco.

El left her foot in between Mike's and she absentmindedly stroked her leg against his calf whilst he tried to concentrate on not choking on his pasta. When he locked eyes with her, it was to find a flirty smile on her face that made Mike's heart race.

The rest of the meal continued mostly the same, laughing, coy smiles, teasing and enough flirting that Mike was desperate to get back to the dorm room. He sighed in relief once he had paid the bill and placed his hand at the small of El's back leading her quickly out of the restaurant.

They somehow made it back into the dorm room with their lips locked and theirs hands wandering on each other whilst Mike kicked the door shut.

El was nibbling at Mike's ear and he couldn't help but groan with want as hot sensations of pleasure sparked up in his body from her lips and teeth teasing him. One of his hands was gripping at her hip, pulling her closer whilst his other hand grazed over her ass, squeezing it and making her moan. Her breathy groan right into his ear made Mike's whole body erupt into flames, and he found himself panting, wanting her *desperately*.

"I've got a surprise for you," El murmured into his ear, making him shudder and gulp. Her hands crawled up his buttoned shirt and she smiled against his ear. "I want you on the bed and naked in three minutes."

Mike felt a shiver of desire run down his back and all he could do in response was grunt, the noise deep and husky.

El stepped back from his body with a smirk on her luscious lips and an animalistic hunger in her eyes. "I'll be right back with your surprise. You have three minutes to get naked." She teased whilst Mike just gaped at her, all of his brain function shutting down.

He watched as El grabbed a small bag from inside her hold all and as she walked to the small en-suite toilet that Mike and Brian shared,

she gave him a teasing grin before closing the door between them.

Mike gasped for air, trying desperately to think straight. He blinked and panted for a moment before remembering her request. At light speed he rushed to get his jacket and shirt off, not caring where they ended up. He kicked off his shoes and socks, pulled his pants and boxers down almost in one go. He wasn't surprised to see how aroused he already was from El's dominance.

He hurried to his bed, sitting down on the edge and trying to catch his breath, feeling oddly self-conscious being so bare. Usually when he was this naked it was because El was either under him or on top.

She was more than three minutes, more like five, but when El finally came out of the bathroom Mike realised instantly that the wait was *totally* worth it.

"Holy shit," he exhaled in a choked voice, his eyes wide and his jaw dropping as he stared at El in her Princess Leia gold bikini costume. It had been a long time since he had seen her in the outfit, and she looked sexier than ever.

She stood there, her hands on her hips, her body looking incredible and a confident smirk on her lips. Mike groaned, unable to control himself as blood rushed to his softened erection and immediately pulsed and twitched his cock into action whilst his pupils dilated as he stared at his stunning girlfriend.

"You are so fucking hot, and I don't deserve you," Mike croaked out as El walked slowly over to him, his eyes moving to her breasts before trailing down the toned lines of her stomach to the mauve coloured cloth that covered her lower half. Mike gulped, memories of moving that cloth to the side and bending El over the D&D table as they fucked emerging to the front of his mind. *Shit I'm done for.*

"You *do* deserve me," El said softly, her voice innocent but her desire fuelled eyes betraying her. She closed the distance between them, her fingers tips stroking along Mike's shoulders as he moved his hands to her hips, feeling the gold rimmed sides of the bikini bottoms.

"You are perfect Michael Wheeler, I love everything about you." El

sighed lovingly, her fingers moved into his hair and pulled his head back, so she could lean down and kiss his lips. Mike groaned into her mouth, his own mouth slanting to deepen the kiss as their breath hitched and their tongues stroked with a building pressure.

"Fuck," Mike gasped when El broke the intense kiss to press her mouth against his jaw line before nibbling and licking down his neck. "I love you so much." He was panting desperately, closing his eyes and letting his body just go with the sensations she was giving him.

El sank to her knees and Mike's eyes opened wide when her fingers stroked over his erection and she grasped his cock, pumping it slowly whilst staring into his dark and heavily lidded eyes. A deep guttural groan ripped out of Mike's chest as El wrapped her lips around his throbbing erection and sucked on the tip.

"Hhmm El," Mike gasped practically inaudible as he watched his girlfriend controlling him. All he could do was stare at her with animalistic want building up in his veins. His chest was heaving, and he fisted the sheets with every groan she brought out of him.

She took him out of her mouth and licked him from base to tip making Mike throw his head back at the incredible sensations she was giving him. "Uh, *fuck*, El," he whimpered as she started to pump him whilst placing her mouth back on him again. El was bobbing her head now and Mike groaned loudly, one of his hands unable to control itself and gripping at her bun, pushing her head closer.

He could feel her tongue swirling off his dick, her hand was gripping him tightly whilst her mouth completely dominated him. Mike's breathing was harsh and rapid as he watched her sucking him, their eyes meeting and making him moan in ecstasy.

That familiar and incredible fire was building, he could feel it getting lower and lower and if he wanted to, he would be pushed over the edge any moment, but Mike wanted more. He wanted to orgasm *with* El.

He moved his hands to her shoulders and nudged her back gently, so she got the hint. El released him, panting, the swell of her breasts looking incredible in the bikini top as her chest heaved.

"Come here baby," Mike said breathlessly, his voice heavy with desire as he held out his hands to El and helped pull her up before bringing her forward, so she would straddle his lap.

Her hands moved to Mike's shoulders and she started to lower herself, Mike guiding himself in gently and slowly. They both gasped in relief and pleasure at finally joining as one.

El took a moment to get used to the intrusion, rocking her hips and making them both breathe heavily at the utter bliss. She wrapped her arms around Mike's neck and they locked eyes, the same desperate need mirrored in their pupils.

Their lips crashed together in a fiery embrace as Mike's hands clutched at El's hips as he started to move her up and down. El moaned and pulled at Mike's lower lip, working it in between her teeth and sending sparks of arousal straight to his already rock hard erection.

"Fuck, you feel so amazing." Mike whispered through clenched teeth as he tried to calm down his twitching cock.

"You're so big, it feels so good," El said breathlessly, her eyes closed and her lower lip between her teeth as she slowly moved up and down his cock. They groaned in unison as Mike's hips found the perfect rhythm with El's.

El's hands moved back to his shoulders and she used them as leverage to bounce causing them both to moan loudly at the pleasurable sensation. El did it again and Mike's hips thrust up to meet her movements making it all the more tantalising. Their movements became needier and boiling hot as they whimpered and groaned into each other's mouths.

The more El bounced the louder she got, and Mike panted as he started to pound into her, knowing she was close to the edge whilst his own arousal was building up quickly. He was desperate for her to finish before he did.

"Ohhh Miiike," El moaned as she flung her head back, a warm hue developing on her skin as her body got ready to climax. Just the sight

was making it incredibly difficult for Mike not to cum, especially when she said his name like *that*.

"Come on baby," He panted whilst his hips met every bounce that El made. "You know you want to," he added trying to goad her further whilst his mouth lowered to her breasts, sucking and nibbling whilst she keened and whimpered. Her breaths sharper and high pitched.

"Fuck, Mike!" She gasped as her walls started to tighten around Mike's throbbing cock.

"El," he breathed out in a groan, ready for them to leap over the cliff together.

Suddenly there was the sound of the door opening and Mike's heart went straight into his throat as Brian walked in completely oblivious.

"Sorry guys I just need to get my copy of Return of the – "

Brian froze, his eyes bulging out of his skull as Mike and El yelped, their heads snapping to look at him, their mouths and eyes wide in horror.

El's costume was hiding their most intimate areas but it was very obvious what was happening.

Mike's face was blazingly hot and El mumbled a mortified "holy fuck" against his chest as she tried to disappear into his arms.

Brian was staring at El and her costume, his jaw on the floor. "P-Princess Leia," he gasped out in awe before choking on his breath and shaking his head. "I-I mean El! *Holy shit* I am so fucking sorry!"

"Brian please leave," Mike whimpered, dropping his burning face onto El's shoulder.

"S-Sorry! Shit yeah, I'll go. I was just...I was just," his eyes were still on El gawking at her in shock as he tried to move to his side of the room whilst stumbling over their strewn clothes and shoes. When Mike lifted his head and caught Brian staring at El he quickly averted his eyes mortified.

Mike glared at Brian and grabbed his comforter and wrapped it around El's shoulders, concealing her body.

"I-I was just getting my copy of Return of The Jedi b-because Dean's is scratched." Brian said gripping at his hair, his eyes still as wide as saucers whilst he shakenly reached for his video stand.

"I don't *care* Brian, just go!" Mike groaned looking anywhere but at his roommate, wondering how he was ever going to be able to look at him again. El on the other hand was now fully concealed under the comforter. Her head just lower than his chest as she literally tried to shrink.

"Right!" Brian gasped, grabbing his VHS before turning back to Mike with apologetic eyes. "I am so sorry, I thought because the door was unlocked you wouldn't – "

"Just go!" Mike shouted, embarrassment written all over his face.

Brian nodded quickly, practically running to the door and yanking it back open. He was about to leave when his master nerd personality couldn't help but force him to say, "isn't it ironic that I'm about to watch Return of the Jedi and El is dressed – "

"Fuck *off* Brian!" Mike and El shouted in response, El's voice muffled from the comforter.

"Understood!" Brian yelped before leaping out of the room and slamming the door closed behind him.

Mike ran a hand over his boiling face whilst El threw the comforter off herself. Her face was just as red, and her eyes were wide with humiliation. "I am *never* going to be able to look at him again!" She whined before hitting her forehead against Mike's shoulder.

"He didn't see anything babe," He tried to say to reassure his girlfriend that Brian hadn't seen the most private parts of her body.

El blinked and stared at Mike with a deadpan expression, "he saw me dressed as Princess Leia Mike. *Slave* Leia!"

They stared at each other and Mike groaned, his head falling back in

frustration. "*Fuck*, my roommate is going to have fantasies about you now. I swear to god if I hear him say your name in his sleep, I'm murdering him..."

El sighed and climbed off Mike's lap, trying to pretend she didn't hear his whine of protest before she sat down on the mattress next to him.

She wrung her hands together in her lap, staring down at the floor for a moment whilst boyfriend caught his breath next to her. "I'm sorry Mike, but I don't think I can have sex tonight after *that*."

Mike groaned and sighed loudly, "Brian is such a fucking cock blocker."

"He's a vagina blocker..." El grumbled.

There was silence for a moment before Mike burst out laughing at what El had said making her giggle too, feeling foolish and embarrassed.

El wiped at her tears of mirth, "I suppose it *was* our fault for not locking the door." She finally reasoned turning to Mike and smiling softly.

He grinned back and nodded, "yeah that was pretty stupid of us."

El sighed and collapsed back on the bed feeling deflated. All of that Valentine's planning and uncomfortable costume for *nothing*. She had been so close to an orgasm that it wasn't even funny. "I was *so* in the mood," El grumbled as she stared up at the ceiling.

Mike came down to lie next to her and pressed a kiss to her shoulder. "I can get you in the mood again if you want?" he teased playfully.

El turned to Mike, appraising his mischievous grin and feeling her blood start to heat up once more. "And *how* exactly would you do that?" she whispered seductively, her eyebrow raising.

Mike cleared his throat and sat up awkwardly, making El sit up too as she watched him curiously.

"Well I've been um, working on something for *you*. A surprise..." Mike admitted sheepishly, his eyes darting to the bedside table for a moment before looking back at El who was more than intrigued.

"What is it?" she asked interestedly.

Mike took a deep breath and El noticed how his cheeks had started to flush pink. He ran a hand through his messy locks. "Okay, promise you won't laugh?"

"I promise."

"Well um, you're always so willing to bring my fantasies to life that I...well I wanted to bring your fantasy to life too." Mike admitted, locking down at the bed in embarrassment.

El wanted to laugh in confusion but then remembered her promise. "Tell me Mike." She prompted instead, absolutely bursting at the seams with curiosity.

"So, you know the scene in Dirty Dancing that you love? When um Johnny and Baby have that sexy dance and then make love?"

El nodded immediately, knowing the scene very well. Dirty Dancing was her favourite film of all time, in fact she was pretty sure she could recite the whole movie and give some of the dances a good go.

Mike finally looked up at her, his cute face bright red. "Well I've been watching that scene religiously and making notes because I wanted to um...*perform* it with you..."

El stared at her boyfriend, blinking almost robotically whilst his words finally sunk in. "Wait," she said shaking her head and clearing her throat. "You want to do that scene...with me?"

"Well yeah," Mike blurted out before coughing awkwardly. "I just know how much you love that scene and I wanted to make the fantasy come true for you, you know?" He looked down at his naked body and snorted with laughter. "Well this isn't *exactly* how I planned it. I wanted to rehearse one more time and I was meant to be in my black slacks and not fucking naked. And you um...well you weren't dressed as Princess Leia when I pictured it..."

El couldn't help but laugh, it was making her chest shake when she tried to contain it.

"Hey! You promised not to laugh!" Mike said grinning making his indignation useless.

El was shuddering with laughter and trying to take deep breaths to calm herself. "Babe I'm *sorry*. It's just you're right. This has *always* been a fantasy of mine and I definitely didn't picture it being dressed as Princess Leia."

"Well let's get changed then!" Mike said standing up eagerly and grabbing his boxers whilst El watched him in surprise.

When she realised he was serious and wanted to change just to get undressed again, she shook her head in amusement and unclasped the bikini top.

Five minutes later, El found herself wondering how the hell the evening had turned into *this*. Not that she was complaining of course.

She was stood in nothing but her red polka dot dress whilst Mike fiddled with the boom box. Her eyes danced across his body and she smirked to herself at how cute his butt looked in the black slacks. He was topless just like Johnny and El didn't know whether to swoon or laugh at how ridiculously sweet he was to do this for her.

Mike found the track '*Cry to Me*' from the love scene, and the soulful beat of the music filled the room. El's breath hitched as her perfect boyfriend turned around and gave her a shy smile before closing the distance between them.

El bit her lip in excitement as Mike's hands moved up her waist and brought her body flush to his own. He kissed her softly for a moment whilst his fingers worked to remove the ties from her hair that had been holding in the bun. Her curly hair sprang free and spiralled down her back.

Mike didn't seem embarrassed anymore and was in the moment as he dipped El low at the waist, their hips against each other as she slowly pulled back into his arms and ran her hands up his bare chest. She

knew they weren't Baby and Johnny but fuck it they were Mike and El and this was *hot*!

They swayed together to the gentle beat of the drum and guitar, then Mike hitched El's leg up against his hip and she gasped, surprised to feel his erection from their sensual dancing. As they moved together Mike eyes were locked on El's, darkening with love and lust as his fingers trailed up her arms, gently tugging them up in the air. His hands slowly ran down her arms and sides whilst he stared at her with such intensity.

Mike found the edge of her dress and pulled it up and off El's body, flinging it across the room so she was left naked. His eyes gazed down at her body, his pupils flickering with fire as his hands flattened against her back. He pulled her body to his, their chest pressing together as El gasped at the sensation.

They carried on swaying, Mike gently squeezing her ass and dipping her low in a circle, kissing down her neck and across her collarbones before bringing her back up.

El's fingers moved from Mike's biceps and caressed along his strong shoulders before dropping down his back, feeling his firm skin underneath her finger tips. He closed his eyes at the sensation but continued to move her purposefully with a building desire.

Their eyes locked again and El leaned up so they could press their foreheads against one another. "I love you," she whispered looking deep into the dark amber orbs.

Mike smiled softly kissing the tip of her nose. "I love you too." His voice was deep and filled with such adoration that El moaned, crashing her lips to his and wrapping her arms around his neck to bring him further down to deepen the kiss.

The music continued to play, the songs changing as Mike hoisted El up and carried her to his bed, their lips still moving together, never wanting to be apart.

El helped Mike out of his pants and boxers and then they were kissing again, worshipping each other's body with every touch, gasp

and racing heartbeat. Mike crawled on top of El, and their fingers entwined as their bodies joined.

They moved together, gasped together and reached euphoria together.

Afterwards the music continued to play on a loop and El lay against Mike's chest, her ear rested over his heart, the sound of life beating in his body making her feel safe and whole.

El leaned up to kiss him gently, smiling against his lips. "You are incredible Michael Wheeler." She said sighing happily.

Mike grinned, his eyes worry free and content. "So are you El Hopper."

They kissed softly, every movement of their lips slow and purposeful. El breathed Mike in and settled back on his chest, her arms tightening around him whilst he pulled her further into his body and stroked her hair lovingly.

"Mike?" El asked tenderly, her fingers tracing small circles across the light muscles on his stomach.

"Yeah El?" he whispered back, his nose nuzzling into her messy locks.

"Happy Valentine's day."

"Happy Valentine's day El."

AN: Okay truth be told I feel like that was shit. I'm sorry *SnowMione17*! I bet this is the most random thing you have ever read!

I don't even know what happened, I just love Dirty Dancing and Brian the Wizard okay?!

Bad news is that we only have three Missing Moments left :-(Good news, did everyone see the Stranger Things Season 2 Episode 9 script?! The Mileven descriptions were EXACTLY what I needed in my life! (It is on the Emmy's website for those that have no idea what I'm talking about)

P.S. Thank you for all of the love on my new Mileven story 'Part of Your World' and the one shot (potentially two shot) 'The Pizza Boy'. And if you haven't read them yet, get to it! ;-)

Yes I am shamelessly promoting myself lol Have a good week everyone :-)

9. Missing Moment 9

The Life You Deserve Missing Moments

AN: I just want to thank you all so much for all of the love of TLYD and the Missing Moments. This story wouldn't be what it is without all of your support! Lots of love to you all

Our prompt today was requested by JakeyFryMason011, The N***a Ya Love To Hate and robysel.

We will get to see how Dustin meets his future wife Laura with the added bonus of Lumax's wedding! Plus, you get to grin about the fact that Ivy Wheeler was conceived that same night ;-)

October 1994

Dustin groaned as he rubbed at his sore head and picked at the contents of his lunchbox. It was Monday after Mike's crazy bachelor weekend and he was *still* feeling the effects of his hangover. The late night flight back to Boston hadn't really helped matters either.

But Dustin knew he couldn't have pretended to be sick, especially not today when he would be giving a talk to the medical students about one of the new electro-cardiac devices. So he resigned to his fate of just getting on with it, trying to eat something on his lunch break whilst rubbing at his temples.

He couldn't help but smile as he remembered the events of the weekend with fond memories. The cabin, the lake, the D&D game and Mike's general embarrassment of the stories about him and El, not to mention how drunk he had gotten. Dustin had to stop from laughing out loud when he remembered Mike's outbursts of love for his soon to be wife. It was sweet, and Dustin couldn't help but be incredibly happy for his best friends, and a *tiny* bit jealous.

During college he had a few girlfriends, but nothing to the extent of what he had with Maggie, a serious relationship that felt like it was going somewhere until it just didn't anymore. They had fallen out of

love and whilst it had sucked to admit it, he knew they were better off as friends. And when Dustin would occasionally see Maggie around Hawkins, he'd always make the effort to stop and catch up with her.

And while he didn't feel that spark with Maggie anymore, he couldn't help but want to find someone that did make his heart race and made him smile like a giddy idiot again. Dustin had been a Biomedical Engineer for a year now and whilst there was only a handful of women in his department, they were much older or were married. He felt like he was really going to have to push the boat out to find the right woman.

Dustin feeling a bit grumpier than earlier reached for one of his Nilla wafers, huffing to himself in frustration for being such a sad wastoid. If he *wanted* to find love then he should be looking for it, not expecting someone to just –

"Are those *real* Nilla wafers?"

"Of course!" Dustin scoffed in offence before looking up to see who had spoken. His eyes widened when he realised who was stood in front of him. Only the most *beautiful* woman he had ever seen. His jaw dropped as he stared at her.

She had light blonde hair tied up into a high bun with strands of her hair that seemed to turn golden in the sunlight. She had the purest face Dustin had ever seen, with ivory soft looking skin, full pink lips, a small dusting of freckles across her nose and high cheek bones and pale blue eyes that immediately drew him in.

She was wearing a shorter version of the lab coats that the medical doctors wore which led Dustin to believe she was a medical student. He confirmed this when he noticed the stamped *Boston University School of Medicine* and logo on the coat.

As Dustin stared at her and she stared back, he felt music playing in his mind, specifically *'I'm a Believer'* by The Monkees for some reason. He gulped quietly and tried to blink and remember what they had been talking about, thankfully when her gaze lowered to Dustin's lunchbox his brain started working again.

"D-Do you want one?" He choked out, his throat incredibly dry as he pushed the yellow box towards her.

She smiled in surprise and took the seat in front of him, the rest of the staff in the break room disappearing from Dustin's vision.

"If you don't mind I'd love one." She said happily whilst Dustin eagerly handed her the box.

"One?" He chuckled, "you've got to have more than *one*."

She sighed and took a wafer, "well I'm meant to be on a diet." She admitted before munching on the Nilla wafer.

Dustin's eyes traitorously glanced down at her body for a moment and he wanted to scoff at the fact that she thought she needed to diet. She was stunning, her curvy body making his mouth water as he quickly averted his eyes to his lunch.

"I don't think you need to diet, you look beautiful as you are..." Dustin said weakly, the idea of complimenting a woman this amazing was almost too much to bare. He waited for her to laugh and walk away.

"Really?" she asked quietly, sounded surprised by his words.

Dustin hesitantly met her eyes only to find they were filled with warmth and surprise instead of repulsion. He felt a weight lift from his shoulders and he smiled bashfully, "really" he said confidently.

She beamed and reached for another Nilla wafer, giving him a friendly grin before eating. Dustin cleared his throat and tried to ignore the loud beating of his heart. "I'm Dustin by the way, Dustin Henderson." he said before holding out his hand.

"I'm Laura Watson. It's nice to meet you," she said kindly shaking his hand whilst Dustin thought he might have a heart attack from the sparks that were emitting from her hand and shooting across his body.

"It's nice to meet you too Laura," Dustin answered breathlessly, unable to stop the giddy smile on his face as he stared at her.

His lunch break seemed to go incredibly fast after that, but Dustin enjoyed himself nonetheless. He found out Laura was from South Dakota, had two older brothers and that her parents were dentists. She explained that she was a third-year medical student and 24, a year older than Dustin.

Begrudgingly Dustin got up when his pager went off from his colleague clearly wanting him to return to work. He sighed, feeling frustrated at how big the Massachusetts General Hospital was and what the chances were of seeing Laura again.

"Thanks for the Nilla wafers Dustin," Laura said waving slightly when he finally moved away from the table.

"You're welcome. A-Any time!" He responded waving a little too enthusiastically and then not looking where he was walking before he collided painfully with one of the other tables. He winced in pain and embarrassment and noticed how Laura bit her lip to stop herself from smiling in amusement.

Dustin blushed and gave her a small salute, about ready to run out of the stupid break room before he could embarrass himself any further.

He walked back to his department wondering if his hangover had made up such a perfect girl. She was beautiful, clearly very smart, she loved science and Nilla wafers. Dustin sighed heavily and walked slowly wishing he could see her again.

His wish came true an hour later when Laura was part of the group of medical students that Dustin was showing the new pace makers too. She seemed just as surprised as he did and gave him a warm smile which he quickly returned before going red under the eyes of all of the other students.

For the rest of the session he tried to concentrate on the new equipment he was showing the group, but his eyes would more than occasionally linger on Laura, only to find she was already looking at him. She would blush and quickly look away with a gentle smile that made his heart race like nothing he had experienced before.

November 1994

November arrived with dropping temperatures and small flurries of snow, but Dustin had never felt happy as he got to know Laura, seeing her at least three times in the break room within a week.

She was funny and witty, sarcastic like Max but gentle like El. Dustin found himself talking to her about anything and everything, like whether time travel was possible, if his mom was lonely in Hawkins without him or if homemade Vanilla wafers were better than Nilla wafers. Laura proved homemade was best when she brought in a batch for him. Dustin almost cried he was so happy.

He told her about Mike and El's upcoming wedding and how they had basically been together since they were 13, although Mike would argue it was 12. Laura swooned at how sweet it was that they were childhood sweethearts and they soon got onto the topic of ex's.

Laura explained she had a serious high school boyfriend and they dated for the first year of college, but long distance didn't work out well for them and they broke up.

Dustin told Laura about his first proper girlfriend Melissa and then his long term relationship with Maggie.

The blonde beautiful smiled at him and raised an eyebrow, "you seem to have a thing for girls who have names starting with an 'M'" she teased him whilst Dustin went red and decided not to mention how he had once crushed on Max too.

"I guess," He said sheepishly rubbing his forearm.

"It sounds like you need to move onto a different letter..." Laura said gently, her coy smile making Dustin gulp nervously as he stared at her lips for a moment.

His eyes flicked up to her pale blue eyes that were filled with so much emotion that he could barely think of anything else. "I think you're right."

The Monday after Mike and El's wedding, Dustin brought in some polaroid photos to show Laura. She scooted her chair closer and he

froze up, his breath hitched as he smelt her floral shampoo whilst she leaned in to look at the photos.

He realised in that moment that he always wanted her close. This wasn't just some crush, he was really falling for this amazing girl and he needed help.

"Son of a bitch," Dustin groaned as he slammed the phone down after having tried to call Steve for the fifth time. He needed advice and he needed it *now*!

Dustin leaned against his wall next to the phone and bit his lip wondering who else he was going to get woman advice from. *Who is the most love sick person I know?*

He snorted in amusement and punched in the numbers to dial the newly married Wheeler's. Dustin huffed in frustration when once again no one picked up. He tried again, and again, and again, and again until –

"Hello?" Came the very tense and on edge voice of Mike who sounded like he had just run a marathon.

"Mike buddy! It's Dustin, look I know it's late and everything but I need some advice – "

"Dustin not now," Mike groaned trying to catch his breath. "We – I was busy..."

Dustin frowned and leaned his shoulder against the wall. "What were you doing?" he asked innocently.

Mike cleared his throat and Dustin heard the whispered voice of El in the background. He smirked to himself as Mike's sharp tone and breathlessness suddenly made sense. He laughed unable to help himself, "or is it more of a case of *who* you were doing?"

Dustin heard Mike inhale sharply and go quiet for a moment in what he was positive would be embarrassed mortification.

"Look, you're just lucky I stopped to answer the phone..." Mike said ignoring the question.

Dustin snorted, "I wouldn't have stopped sex to take a phone call. You're a better friend than me Mike."

"Dustin you called like *five* times! I thought something was wrong." Mike insisted, his voice grumpy and sullen. "What did you need?" he added exasperatedly.

"I need woman advice," Dustin said seriously, his cheeks reddening as he thought about Laura's smile and her laughter, her pink lips and pale blue eyes...

There was noise on the phone like shuffling and mumbles before El's voice came out clear, "woman advice? Dustin how can I help."

He laughed not surprised that El had been listening in and deduced that she would do a better job on the advice front than Mike would, and Dustin realised that it was probably true.

"Okay so I've met this amazing medical student called Laura..." Dustin began telling El and Mike who was listening in about the beautiful blonde he now had the pleasure to call a friend. But he wanted more than that and there were times when he was *sure* she was flirting with him.

But then other times he wondered if he was just overanalysing and looking so desperately for hints that she liked him too that he was making things seem more important than they were.

"Well I definitely think she likes you too." El concluded whilst Dustin had slumped down the wall to get in a more comfortable sitting position on the floor.

"You think?" he asked hopefully, wanting nothing more than his Mage friend to be right.

"Absolutely, let's look at the evidence. So, she only bakes for you right?"

"Yes, and she makes the best vanilla wafers I've *ever* had."

"Well I only ever baked for Mike, it's like a token of affection. And then she was clearly flirting when she said you should move on from

the 'M's and go for someone else. *Clearly* her. You said she keeps smiling at you and touching your arm when you make her laugh, and she is sitting way closer to you now right?"

"Yes, to all of that." Dustin answered breathlessly, his heart hammering at the possibility of Laura liking him back.

"But are you *allowed* to date a medical student?" Mike piped up.

Dustin sighed, "it's frowned upon, but because I'm not her mentor or anything to do with what she does in the hospital, I think it would be okay." He reasoned, thinking of how unfair it would be if he couldn't be with Laura purely because of his job.

"Anyway, if that was the case and she *wanted* to be with me and work wouldn't allow it. Then I'd just move to another hospital..."

"Wow." Mike and El said in unison, their voices awed. "You must have it really bad dude." Mike added impressed.

"Well you'd do the same for El," Dustin chuckled, trying not to admit how deep his feelings were for Laura.

"Of course I would." Mike said, his grin so evident over the phone.

"Aw *Mike*," El swooned and then Dustin flinched as he heard them kissing over the phone. He waited patiently, tapping his fingers on his knee trying to let them have their moment but it seemed it wasn't ending anytime soon.

"*Okay*," Dustin said awkwardly hearing their kiss become more wet by the gross sound on the phone. "So I'm gonna go because you two are gross newlyweds. Thanks for the advice though!" he called, not waiting for a reply, even though he wasn't sure he would actually get one before putting the phone down.

Dustin leaned his head back against the wall and closed his eyes, wondering if he would have the guts to tell Laura how he really felt about her. Guys like him didn't get the girl like her. Stacey had embedded that into him all those years ago at the Snow Ball.

December 1994

Dustin yawned loudly as he walked slowly towards the entrance of the hospital. It was Christmas morning and he had just finished his night shift. He knew his mom was disappointed that he wasn't home for actual Christmas, but he was flying back to Hawkins in two days to spend a week with his mom, her cats and Max and Lucas who were up for the holiday.

So Christmas day was going to consist of take out food and binge watching of all of the best Christmas films. He bundled his long jacket around his body, already feeling the cold coming out of the automatic hospital doors as he made his way towards the parking lot.

He had seen Laura two days ago in the break room and she had wished him a merry Christmas, giving him a card that he obsessed over the amount of kisses and the little heart drawn next to her name.

Dustin hadn't had the guts to ask her out on a date yet, but he felt himself building up to it, he just needed a break in Hawkins. Maybe he could get a pep talk from Steve and Lucas before he made a move.

With all of this in mind it was the last thing Dustin expected to turn a corner and see Laura tucked up in a large jacket, a knitted scarf and a cute bobble hat waiting for the hospital shuttle bus.

"Laura?" Dustin asked in confusion as he walked closer to the girl of his dreams. *Literally...*

Laura looked up and caught his gaze, her curious expression turned into a big grin, her eyes immediately lighting up. "Dustin!"

"What are you doing here?" he chuckled, his heart beginning to race and the butterflies flurrying in his stomach when he stood next to her. "I thought you were going to South Dakota for Christmas."

"I was," Laura said shuddering from the cold and wrapping her arms around herself. "But the hospital was offering extra shifts for double pay and I couldn't resist. I do orderly work on the side too you see." She explained whilst Dustin nodded in understanding.

"Yeah El used to do that on the side too. I can't even imagine how expensive medical school is." He said smiling gently.

Laura laughed, the sound warming his body and keeping the chill away. "You have no idea." She said shaking her head in amusement. "But it will be worth it all when I'm a doctor."

Dustin nodded and grinned like a fool, "you're going to be an amazing doctor Laura. The patients will be lucky to have you."

Laura looked up at him earnestly, her eyes softening and her smile gentle. "Thank you. That means a lot to me Dustin, especially from you..."

He gave her a bashful smile, his cheeks heating up at her compliment. He stuffed his hands in his jacket pocket and looked towards the parking lot for a moment, wondering if he had the courage to finally spill his feelings for her.

"So, seeing as you're in Boston for Christmas, what are you planning on doing today?"

Laura sighed, "well just like you I've finished my night shift, so I was just thinking pj's, ramen noddle's because I'm a student and binge-watching Christmas films."

Dustin laughed unable to believe how similar their plans were. He smiled at her warmly and then blinked, taking a deep breath. "Well... I was actually thinking of doing the same thing. You wouldn't want to erm...well, would you want to come over to mine and we can watch movies together? I'll even buy you take-out as a Christmas present." He said eagerly, hoping to persuade her with food. It would work for him after all.

Laura gaped in surprise, her eyes scanning his face as if wondering for a second whether he was joking or not. She practically beamed and nodded her head enthusiastically, "I'd love that! Can we have Chinese food?"

Dustin grinned, feeling so happy that he wanted to just start skipping across the parking lot. "Yeah that's cool," he said cheerfully. He

cleared his throat, "I can drive you to your house share if you want to pick up some stuff like your pyjamas?"

Laura nodded avidly and then linked their arms together to Dustin's surprise. His breath stopped for a moment and his brain short circuited before he remembered how to walk and led them towards his car.

The car journey was fun, both of them singing along to *'Fairytale of New York'*, their shoulders nudging together as they swayed to the joyful music. They both laughed as they tried to imitate the Irish accents of the singers and grinned at each other like idiots. The fact they had both finished a 12-hour night shift seemed to drift away.

The radio presenter announced the new Christmas song by *Mariah Carey* before it started to play, and Dustin found his cheeks begin to blush as he listened to the words *"make my wish come true, all I want for Christmas is you..."*

He chanced a glance at Laura who was leaning back in her seat and looking at him with a gentle smile that made his heart practically jump out of his chest and land into her hand.

"Your apartment is really nice," Laura commented happily as she looked around and Dustin hung up their jackets, thanking every God in the universe that he had cleaned up for once in preparation to leave for Hawkins.

"Thanks," Dustin said blushing slightly as she looked at the photos on his bookshelf and touched a frame delicately of him as a young child with his mom. She had a soft smile on her face and Dustin wanted to just groan because of how perfect she was.

He walked closer to Laura watching as she looked intently at his photo of the boys in the science fair. Dustin swallowed nervously, "um I have cleidocranial dysplasia, that's why I didn't have many teeth in that photo. I know it's strange..." he quickly explained feeling embarrassed by the attention she was showing his photos.

Laura turned to look at him, taking her eyes off the photos and staring into his eyes with an honesty in her eyes. "It's not strange at

all." She said resolutely before grinning bashfully. "I was actually thinking how cute you looked."

"Oh," Dustin croaked, feeling bashful all over again as she gave him the smile that just melted him on the spot. He cleared his throat and let her words sink in before a teasing smirk quirked up his lips. "What do you mean how cute I *looked*? Am I not cute now?"

Laura giggled, looking down at the carpet, before glancing up at him through her thick eyelashes. "No, you're still cute...but I'd say handsome fits you better now."

They stared at each other, Dustin's heart in his throat as he wondered whether to listen to his instincts and kiss her or whether she was just being kind and he would ruin their friendship by taking such a big step.

"So...should we order that Chinese?" he choked out instead of being brave, internally kicking himself as he turned away to go and get the take out menu, not noticing the slightly disappointed look on Laura's face.

Dustin went a bit overboard with the order, wanting to get each and everything that the beautiful blonde said she loved but didn't get to eat anymore because of her student budget. He remembered those days well and felt thankful that he was on a proper wage now, and a decent one at that.

He showed Laura to the bathroom where she got dressed in her pyjamas whilst Dustin headed into his bedroom and changed into a pair of sweats and a white t-shirt, seeing as he didn't actually own pyjamas. But he wasn't exactly going to chill in his birthday suit around the girl he was pretty sure he was in love with.

Dustin headed back to the living room finding Laura in a pair of red flannel pj's looking so adorable and cosy. Before he made himself known he froze on the spot as he watched her taking out her hair ties and stared in disbelief as gold slightly wavy hair fell down from its hold and landed gracefully around her shoulder blades.

His eyes widened, and his jaw fell in awe. Having never seen Laura

outside of work, her hair had always been tied up as was protocol. But now he wanted nothing more than to run his hands through her blonde locks and see if they were as soft and silky as they looked.

Dustin quickly blinked and averted his eyes when he realised Laura had caught him staring at her. She smiled shyly and tucked her hair ties into her bag, giving him a moment to compose himself.

The only word Dustin could describe the rest of his Christmas day was *perfect*. They both tucked themselves under multiple blankets and started their movie marathon, only pausing the films to grab their Chinese food or to have bathroom breaks.

They both laughed their heads off at *Home Alone*, Laura insisting she would have the same screeching reaction as Marv if someone put a tarantula on her face. Dustin grinned, his thoughts drifting to Dart for a moment as he thought about the creatures that Laura should *really* fear instead of spiders.

After watching '*A Nightmare Before Christmas*' and discussing the genius of Tim Burton, Dustin made himself and Laura two large mugs of hot chocolate with cream and mini marshmallows. He brought them over with a box of Nilla wafers.

"Thank you," Laura smiled softly, snuggling further into her blanket whilst cupping her mug and taking a sip.

"You're welcome," Dustin said more as an automatic response as he stared at her, his heart jittering with what he now realised was love. He *loved* her.

"So, what's next?" Laura asked with excitement bringing Dustin out of his daze and making him avert his eyes to his VHS tapes.

He smiled and grabbed the next one on his list, "do you like *Muppets Christmas Carol*?"

Laura giggled and nodded avidly before reaching for a Nilla wafer. "Yes, I love it!"

And I love you Dustin's heart sang. Instead he cleared his throat and put the movie in, snuggling back into his blankets and trying not to

squeal when Laura moved closer to him and laid her head on his shoulder. For a good five minutes he didn't dare to move, just trying to focus on getting oxygen in his lungs.

The tension between them became comfortable as they both chuckled and tried to sing along to the songs, Dustin proud of his Kermit impression especially when Laura giggled, snorted and then laughed for snorting.

The sky soon turned darker, the heavy blanket of snow in the air keeping it from going completely black, the clouds more of a dusty blue and grey.

"It's so beautiful out there," Laura mused as she watched the light snow fall out of the living room window.

"Yeah, beautiful..." Dustin said breathlessly, not keeping his eyes off Laura.

She sighed happily and then turned slightly facing Dustin who gulped and adjusted his position too, so they were looking properly at each other.

"Can I tell you something?" she whispered.

"Anything," Dustin replied, his voice choked and nervous as he stared into her softened pale blue eyes.

"This has been the best Christmas I've ever had." Laura said, her shoulders heaving slightly in relief at getting her confession out.

Dustin gaped for a moment, stunned by her revelation before smiling brightly when he realised he felt the same way. Yes, he had some fantastic Christmases, like playing D&D with the guys, happy and filled up on his mom's cooking. But he had never felt like *this* before.

"It's the best Christmas I've ever had too," Dustin whispered back, his breath hitching as he made himself look at her, letting her in, letting her see his vulnerability and nerves.

Laura smiled softly, her eyes lighter than usual as she appraised him. "There's just one thing that would make it perfect." She said

breathlessly, her eyes flickering down to his lips.

Holy shit, holy shit, holy shit. Even Dustin knew he couldn't be stupid enough to misread the signs here. So instead he continued to look at her, ignoring the blush on his cheeks as he inched closer.

Laura's hand moved to his cheek, stuttering his breath before she closed the distance between them and their lips met in a beautiful chaste kiss that awoke every sense in Dustin's body.

She pulled away, nervously biting her bottom lip. "Was that okay for me to do that?" she whispered anxiously.

All Dustin could do was grin, grin like the biggest fool in love in the whole world. *Jesus this must be what Mike feels like all the time!*

"It will only not be okay if you don't do it again," he said beaming, making Laura giggle in surprise before she closed the space between them again for their second kiss.

This one lasted longer, *much* longer. Dustin *finally* got to weave his fingers into her golden locks which were as soft and silky as he imagined whilst Laura's arms wrapped around his neck bringing him closer.

They smiled against each other's mouths, breaking now and again to laugh giddily before drawing back in like magnets. Everything about it was perfect and in that moment, Dustin knew he would never love *any one* like he loved Laura. This was only the beginning of something very exciting.

April 1995

"Are you okay babe?" Dustin whispered to Laura as he watched her staring out of the small plane window looking nervous as they made their way to California.

Laura turned back to her boyfriend and smiled gently, "yeah," she said in a breathy voice. "I'm just a little scared I guess about meeting your friends."

"Why are you scared?" Dustin couldn't help but chuckle as he squeezed her hand tenderly and stroked her knuckles with his thumb.

"It's just, they mean everything to you Dustin and I want to make a good impression." Laura admitted giving her boyfriend a sheepish grin when he continued to smile at her warmly.

He lifted their joined hands to his lips and kissed the smooth back of her hand. "They're going to love you babe, I promise."

Laura breathed a sigh of relief and leaned her head around Dustin's shoulder whilst he put his arm around her, his nose nuzzling against her floral smelling hair. He breathed her in and grinned to himself.

Since spending Christmas day together, they had been inseparable except for work. In January Dustin took Laura on their first date to a romantic Italian restaurant and then a stroll through the Kelleher Rose Garden. And while it felt like the perfect night to be intimate, Dustin was trying to take things slow, not wanting to ruin what was already shaping into the best relationship he had ever been in.

But Dustin soon learnt that spontaneity could be the best thing and in early February whilst having a flour war with Laura whilst she tried to teach him how to bake, he grinned like a fool when he spotted the chocolate on her nose and the words flowed out of him so easily. "I love you."

Laura gaped in surprise, her smile soon beaming and making her glow with happiness. "I love you too Dustin." She had answered breathlessly before they were kissing, passionately and with a needy desire before Laura smiled shyly and pulled her boyfriend along to her bedroom.

And now it was April and they were flying out to San Diego to witness Lucas and Max getting married. Dustin smiled to himself whilst still cuddled up to his beautiful girlfriend, knowing that everything had turned out like it was meant to. Yes, he had crushed on Max but her and Lucas *worked*. They were like two jigsaw pieces, like yin and yang completely balancing each other out. Dustin couldn't be happier for his best friends, they truly deserved each other, and he was honoured to be one of their best men.

When Dustin and Laura got into San Diego International Airport they were met at baggage claim by Lucas who was grinning with excitement. Dustin rushed to him and the best friends, more like brothers clutched each other tightly. It was hard living away from all of his friends, he missed their banter, their jokes and knowing someone was close by who had experienced the same traumas from 1983. But he hoped one day he would be able to share all of that with Laura.

And he would. Three years later, he would sit Laura down on Mike and El's couch whilst they watched on, a toddling Ivy being bounced on her father's knee whilst Dustin opened up to Laura about the ghosts of the past.

Understandably it had taken her some time to truly acknowledge what he was saying, being a woman of science, she needed the facts and evidence which El was more than happy to provide.

After a small glass of whiskey from the bottle that Hopper had bought Mike, she was more pliable to the truth and discussed in amazement about the Upside Down, Dustin knowing that her beautiful mind was ticking away trying to understand how it all worked.

But for now, it was 1995 and Dustin was introducing Laura to Lucas for the first time. "It's so good to finally meet you, Dustin never stops talking about." His best friend said whilst giving the blonde a hug and winking at an embarrassed Dustin behind Laura's shoulder.

"It's lovely to meet you too Lucas," his girlfriend said warmly. "Dustin talks about you all in such high regard."

"He better," Lucas teased punching Dustin in the shoulder who play fought back, both of the men chuckling before grabbing the bags and heading to Lucas's car. The soon to be groom chatted away with Laura, showing her around as she had never been to California before. The boys told her about the road trip the party had taken back in 1987 and how they had fallen in love especially with San Diego.

"Have any of the others got in yet?" Dustin asked whilst Lucas turned

down the street towards the hotel they were all staying in.

"Yeah Will and Jen have already checked in and my family too. I've just got to pick up El and Mike later on from the airport." Lucas commented before heading into the underground parking for the hotel.

After checking in and unpacking, Laura took a deep breath as Dustin took her hand and led her down to the hotel restaurant where Lucas's family were holding a rehearsal dinner and where Laura would first meet the party.

Dustin just smiled knowing that Laura had *nothing* to worry about. And of course, five minutes later the party were all over her, especially El, Max and Jen all three of them like giggling school girls as they told Laura all of Dustin's most embarrassing moments whilst he cringed.

"She seems really good for you man," Mike said patting Dustin on the shoulder while they hung around the bar with Will and waited for their drinks. Lucas had been dragged off by his mother to speak to all of the guests and not just the party members.

"Yeah she's really sweet," Will added. "She's getting along with everyone like she was always here."

Dustin beamed with pride and watched Laura, sitting comfortably with the bride and her bridesmaids, fawning over Max's engagement ring as she obviously retold her Valentine's engagement story for the hundredth time.

"I love her," he said simply, sighing happily. "So much. It's crazy, I never thought I would feel this way."

Mike grinned, his eyes moving onto El. "It's the best feeling."

"Definitely." Dustin smiled before being distracted by the bartender who pushed the tray filled with all the party's drinks towards him.

The morning of the wedding wasn't as hectic as Dustin thought it would be, Max's wedding planner having sorted out most of the trivial issues that always arose like button holes going missing until

they were located in the wrong fridge and one of the bridesmaid's, Erica to be exact moaning that she had got a mark on her pastel blue dress. That was soon rectified by Laura who knew a chemistry combination that would lift the stain.

"If you don't marry her, I will!" A flustered Max called to Dustin after thanking Laura for saving the bridesmaid dress. Both Dustin and Laura blushed at the comment and gave each other bashful smiles.

Whilst Dustin got dressed into his suit with the boys, all of them playfully teasing a very nervous Lucas, Laura got dressed with the girls, feeling honoured to be invited in with the bridesmaids and bride to get ready for the special day.

Laura came to find Dustin once she was ready and when he opened the hotel room door his tongue was practically dragging on the plush carpeted floor. She looked so beautiful in a silver and blue floral lace dress that swayed against her knees elegantly. It had quite a low neckline and Dustin tried to close his jaw so that he could gulp.

"What do you think?" Laura asked coyly, doing a little spin so that the skirt of the dress lifted slightly exposing the start of her silky thighs.

"Stunning," Dustin croaked out breathlessly, his eyes dancing all over her striking form. Her blonde hair had been blow-dried and her light make up accentuated her natural beauty.

He quickly moved forward to his girlfriend, his hands grasping her waist as he grinned at her lovingly, feeling in awe of her. "How did I deserve a girl like you?"

Laura's eyes filled with adoration and she looked at his light suit and smiled "What did I do to deserve *you* Dustin Henderson?"

They kissed gently, Dustin trying to be more enthusiastic before Laura pulled away giggling and swatting at his grabbing hands as she teased that he would ruin her make up.

"But you don't need it!" he whined calling after her when she gave him a wink and said she'd see him at the aisle. Dustin heaved a heavy sigh and watched her leave, a grin spreading on his lips at how in

love he was.

An hour later Dustin stood at the aisle with Mike and Will whilst they tried to support a very shaky Lucas who kept taking deep breaths and craning his neck to check if Max was coming yet.

Dustin looked in the crowd for Laura, she was sitting in the second row and chatting away to one of Max's cousins before she caught her boyfriend staring at her and gave him a warm smile and a little wave which he returned immediately.

The music suddenly began, and Lucas looked like he was about to faint, Dustin's steady hand keeping him up as the crowd all quietened down and stood for the arrival of the bridal party.

It truly was a beautiful venue, a section of Mission Beach solely for the wedding giving Max and Lucas's the privacy that they wanted on a location that meant a lot, especially to the bride who had grown up here.

There was a slight breeze on the Pacific Ocean which Dustin was thankful for otherwise the boys would have boiled in their light suits. He adjusted his waistcoat slightly before the first bridesmaid, Jen came into view.

All of the girls had on pastel blue chiffon dresses that swayed when they walked. Dustin grinned between the girls he had grown up with and their partners. Will looked really choked when he saw Jen, taking a deep breath of his own.

Mike had been teased in the morning by the boys that he would cry when he saw El like he did on his own wedding day. And whilst he insisted it was because El was the bride that time, when his wife came walking down the aisle after Erica, beaming with pride for her best friend and looking beautiful, Mike gasped and quickly wiped at his wet eyes.

The music started to lift and build the tension, especially for Lucas when Max finally came into view, clutching onto her very proud and emotional looking dad.

Dustin gasped along with the boys and heard Lucas give out a sob. None of them had *ever* seen Max like this. Yes, they had seen her reluctantly wearing dresses for Prom or Homecoming, but this was totally different.

Her dress was simple, no jewels or lace, just a bright white sweetheart neckline mermaid style dress that looked so perfect on her. Her red hair was down, natural and with no fuss and she wore minimal make up. Dustin grinned at one of his best friends, so happy for her especially when he saw the joy and emotion she was radiating as she stared solely at Lucas.

Dustin turned to the groom and wasn't surprised to see the tears down his cheeks and the shuddering of his shoulders as he kept his focus on his bride to be, a choked and adoring smile on his face.

As soon as they were close enough, Max gave her father a kiss on the cheek and then immediately took Lucas's hand, Dustin was surprised to see she was shaking too. He smiled and faced the front with Mike and Will who were looking at their respective partners before turning back to the bride and groom.

The ceremony was perfect, with the white sand between their bare feet, the slight breeze flowing the girls dresses delicately making them look ethereal, and the soft and tender words being spoken by Lucas and Max.

They were a very private couple, not as outspoken of their feelings like Mike and El, and yet in front of their family and friends they poured their hearts out to each other and wiped each other's tears. Dustin's heart swelled with love for them both, so thankful they had found each other.

When they were pronounced husband and wife, Max squealed with laughter as Lucas immediately scooped her up in his arms, holding her in the bridal position and beaming with happiness as she peppered his face with kisses. Everyone cheered and clapped, ridiculously happy for the new Mr and Mrs Sinclair.

The wedding reception was filled with photos, more food than even Dustin could manage, enough alcohol to get them all giggling and

great music that had them all dancing.

A familiar song started to play when Dustin and Laura were still sat down next to each other, and the blonde immediately noticed when her boyfriend slightly flinched as *'Time After Time'* filled the large white canopy area.

Lucas and Max were already on the dance floor and swayed together kissing. Mike stood up with a grin and held his hand out for his drunk and giggling wife who immediately allowed herself to be pulled onto the dance floor. Will and Jen got up next, smiling lovingly at each other.

"Do you not like this song?" Laura asked curiously turning back to Dustin who blinked, getting himself out of his emotional turmoil and turning to his amazing girlfriend.

He shrugged feeling embarrassed, "I tried to get the most popular girl in the school to dance with me to this song at our Snow Ball when I was 13. She um...well she was really mean and laughed at me in front of her friends. All of them rejected me until Mike's sister came and saved me. But it still...well it ruined this song."

Laura stared at him for a moment, empathy and love filling her pale blue eyes. She smiled softly and immediately stood up worrying Dustin that she was going to walk off. But instead she turned around to him, cleared her throat and held out her hand.

"Dustin Henderson, I think you are the coolest guy in the room. You're so handsome, funny, smart and I love you. Will you dance with me?"

Dustin stared at the beautiful blonde, she was everything he had ever wanted and there was no one else that he would *ever* want to dance with again. He felt choked, his heart racing. His fingers immediately laced with hers and he gave her a watery smile. "Nothing would make me happier."

Laura beamed and pulled him along gently, finding a spot in the middle of the floor near to their friends. Dustin grinned, feeling thankful for Nancy's lesson in how to dance as he placed his hands on

his girlfriend's waist and she wrapped her arms around his neck and brought him close enough for them to lean their foreheads against one another.

"I love you Laura," Dustin said softly, his eyes beseeching and honest as he stared into the pale blue orbs that he adored.

She smiled bashfully, her eyes sparkling as she gazed back at him as they swayed gently to the music. "I love you too Dustin."

The rest of the wedding went by in a blur of fun and alcohol, all of them making the most of the open bar. Dustin lost count of the amount of shots he had but all he knew was that he barely left the dance floor, both him and Laura sweaty and happy as they let loose.

The party seemed to go on all night, a drunk Mike eventually hoisting a squealing and laughing El over his shoulder before slurring to the group, "I have to take my wife away now. We have unfinished business..."

Lucas hollered, and Jen wolf whistled as the Wheeler's disappeared into the night. Dustin grinned and turned to Laura just in time to catch her as she chuckled herself at him and kissed him passionately. He grinned against her lips before she whispered seductively in his ear and made his eyes widened.

"Y-Yeah, we're gonna get going too..." He said breathlessly to his friends whilst Laura smirked and dragged him along.

It was a night that Dustin would never forget. But it wouldn't be the only one.

He would remember his nerves as he strolled down the white powdery beach of the Bahamas with Laura, both of them celebrating her almost finishing her residency in the hospital before she would become a licensed medical doctor.

They sat and watched the sun going down along the turquoise water before Dustin exhaled out his nerves and turned to the love of his life, her hair like a halo and her skin sun kissed.

He pulled her up gently from the powdery sand and whilst she

chuckled asking him what he was doing, Dustin got down on one knee, pulling out a rose gold engagement ring with a bright white diamond that had Laura gasping in surprise and awe.

Dustin spoke words of love to her, telling her he had fallen in love from the moment she had asked him if his Nilla wafers were the real deal. She was everything to him and perfect for *him* in every way.

They both cried and smiled like idiots, Laura quickly sobbing out a yes before they embraced and kissed passionately as the sun fell below the horizon.

They came back to that beach, a year later to get married in front of their family and friends. Promising each other a future in which they would always stand by one another and always love each other.

Dustin and Laura eventually moved to Hawkins, his guilt over his mom missing out on the majority of his life becoming too much. Thankfully Laura was supportive and understanding, both of them getting jobs in the same hospital as El.

Laura grew to love Hawkins just as much as Dustin and it didn't hurt having Mike and El as neighbours, with Jen and Will moving back to their home town a few years later.

And on May 5th 2000, their family of two would become a family of three. Dustin would initially be disappointed that their baby wasn't born on May 4th, but the moment Laura brought their son Sam Henderson into the world, Dustin realised dates didn't matter one bit. All that mattered was his family and friends, who he would protect and love *forever*.

AN: Okay this made me really happy to write but it was also kind of sad because I feel like I have now closed the chapter on the party's partners and their lives together. :-(

I just wanted Dustin to have a happy ending too!

Next chapter we will have Mileven and their young children with appearances from the party and their children of course. And then

after you've read that, I wonder if you'll be able to guess what the final chapter will focus on?

Thank you so much for reading this, and if you enjoyed it please let me know as writers need feedback! :-D

10. Missing Moment 10

The Life You Deserve Missing Moments

AN: Hey everyone! I'm back to you with the second to last Missing Moment :-)

If you want domestic fluffy Mileven and Mileven babies, then this is the Missing Moment for you!

Prompts for seeing Mike and El with their children were requested by RWHG8, enochpowell and a guest.

I hope you enjoy this one :-)

Missing Moment 10

July 2000

"Okay James let's make a deal," Mike said briskly before carefully placing his ten month old son onto his changing table. James immediately sat up, something he had been doing without support for three months now.

"Can you promise not to pee or poop on daddy when he changes your diaper? I'd *really* appreciate it." Mike pleaded with his son who just giggled and stuck his little chunky hand into his mouth.

Mike sighed, hoping that his son's giggle was an admission of behaving. With difficulty he got James to lie down which wasn't an easy task when he thought it would be fun to roll over during his dirty diaper being extracted from under him.

"James *stop*, you're going to get it – yep. You've got it on your penis. Great job son." Mike exhaled shaking his head in exasperation as he cleaned up his very amused son. James's little cheeky smile was contagious, and Mike found himself grinning, pulling up the swimming diaper and the blowing raspberries on his son's tummy whilst he giggled loudly.

"Dada!" James squealed, his gummy mouth opening to show off his multiple baby teeth. Mike couldn't help but laugh with his son, the warmth of his baby boy's laughter flooding his heart with love and joy.

"What's going on in here?" El called in amusement before rounding the corner into the nursery holding hands with four year old Ivy. As soon as their daughter saw Mike she pulled away from El and went running over to him in her swimsuit.

"Daddy! Daddy!" She shouted, tugging at his shorts and jumping up and down. "Do you like my swimming suit?"

Mike turned his head to his daughter and smiled brightly, taking in her cute little pink costume which flared out around her hips like a tutu, she looked like a ballerina. "You look beautiful pumpkin." He answered softly, affectionately tousling Ivy's dark hair before focusing back on getting James dressed into his swimsuit which was bright blue with colourful dinosaurs on it.

El appeared by Mike's side and they shared a loving grin, their eyes twinkling with contentment over their family life. They both had stressful jobs, but they took solace in days like this. It was the height of summer and they were going to the Hawkins community pool where Ivy was going to have her first swimming lesson.

They had been swimming with her before, taking her in the water since she was a baby, but this was official with an instructor and their little girl had been excited about it for weeks.

"Come on baby, let's let daddy finish getting James ready okay? We've still got to put your dress on." El said coming over to Ivy's side where she was watching her dad lifting a yellow t-shirt onto James, it read in bold letters, *"I'm cute, mom's hot, dad's lucky."*

El snorted with laughter when she saw what her poor baby boy was wearing. "Mike," she said reasonably, watching her husband's playful grin. "He can't wear that."

"Why not?" Mike teased, "it's true."

El rolled her eyes in amusement and picked up Ivy who was too distracted by watching her daddy and James to move. "Who bought that anyway?" El asked in confusion when Mike struggled to put shorts on James who was trying to escape the changing table. With Ivy on her hip, El leaned forward to steady her son, tickling him under his chin and grinning when he giggled.

"Dustin, I think." Mike said absentmindedly.

El laughed and shook her head, "that doesn't surprise." She sighed and turned to Ivy. "Right come on little lady, we need to get you ready otherwise we'll be late."

"Bye daddy," Ivy said waving at Mike who beamed like he always did when he heard their children calling him 'daddy' or 'dada'.

"See you in five minutes pumpkin," he said sweetly, leaning in to kiss her soft cheek and then turning to give El a lingering kiss on her lips. They both smiled like fools in love, the same giddy feeling of electricity was still present between them. They were in no doubt that it would ever go away, in fact it only seemed to grow stronger as they built their lives together.

The Wheeler family arrived at the Hawkins community pool to find it streaming with families. "Wow it's busier than I thought," Mike said in surprise as he held Ivy's hand and El's hand whilst James bounced up and down on her hip.

"Well she's booked on the class so it's not like they won't take her." El reasoned whilst her husband nodded.

"Okay well we'll go and speak to the instructor and get started I guess," Mike said as he turned to El and James. His eyes flickered to their energetic little boy and back to his wife. "Are you sure you'll be okay?"

El laughed and hoisted up the changing bag on her arm. "Of course, babe. We both know Ivy wants you in there with her." She said gesturing towards the pool. As El had always suspected, it came as no surprise when Ivy turned into a daddy's girl.

Mike nodded and smiled gently, leaning over to kiss El. "I love you," he whispered gently against her mouth.

El's heart raced and she sighed happily, "I love you too." Mike pulled away enough to kiss James on the forehead before picking up Ivy.

"Say bye bye to mommy Ivy." Mike instructed to their daughter who was already launching herself at El and giving her a wet kiss on the cheek.

"Bye bye mommy! Are you and James going to watch me?" she asked eagerly.

El grinned at her little girl, so in love with her children. "Of course, sweetheart. Mommy and James will be just in the baby pool there," she indicated to the much smaller and shallower pool next to main one.

Ivy nodded her head in understanding and Mike let her back down, taking her hand again and giving El another kiss before letting their daughter guide him over to the instructor, her excitement was palpable.

El beamed watching her perfect husband and their beautiful little girl. Everyone said that Ivy was identical to El except for her dark hair and her amber eyes. James on the other hand was Mike's twin. The only difference was that he had El's hazel's eyes. It still blew her mind to see how they could have created two such perfect souls.

"Come on monkey," El cooed to her son, kissing his mop of black locks that were starting to curl on the end. She dreaded to think of the day when he would need his first haircut.

El found a few sun loungers right next to the baby pool and dropped their stuff onto it, sighing in relief when the weight of the bags left her shoulder. She sat James down and helped him out of his clothes so he was in his swim suit. El passed him Rory the dinosaur to distract him whilst she took her hands off him and quickly pulled her summer dress off so she was in her swimsuit.

After having James only 10 months ago, she wasn't confident yet

wearing a bikini again, no matter how many times Mike told her she was perfect. Pregnancy definitely changed your body.

Content that James was still distracted with Rory who had had more battery changes than El could count to keep him roaring, she turned her head to see what Mike and Ivy were up to.

He had stripped off his shirt and was just entering the pool with their daughter who was looking just as eager as she had earlier. Her love of water was definitely a trait she had picked up from Mike. El felt so thankful that her own fears hadn't been pushed onto her babies.

El turned back to James who had a cry when she took Rory off him, he didn't understand that the old dinosaur wasn't water proof, however he seemed to calm down when she replaced the toy with a few bath toys. "Come on baby," she said picking James up and resting him on her hip as she got into the baby pool with him, making sure to position herself so she had a view of Ivy and Mike.

She sat down in the water which barely reached her hips and James rested on her knee, content to splash in the water and play with the toys whilst El wrapped her arms around his chunky tummy to keep him safe.

The sun beat down on them and El was thankful that she had put sun cream on the kids and Mike when they got out of the car. She felt James's head and frowned to herself, looking towards the changing bag and thinking about his hat that she could just see poking out.

She looked around wearily, but the other parents were all preoccupied with their own child's swimming lesson. Not taking her eyes off the main pool, El stretched her hand out and in less than a second James's hat was securely in her hand. Feeling slightly smug she placed the matching dinosaur sun hat onto her son's head. He protested for a few minutes but then seemed to accept that the hat wasn't going anywhere.

El relaxed leaning back against the tiles of the pool and watched her husband and daughter. A warm smile quirked on her lips as she watched the instructor singing nursery rhymes with the kids who were all being held by their parents as they swam around in a circle

or were dipped under the water.

Occasionally Ivy would ask Mike something and he would immediately answer pointing at El. Their daughter would find her and El would wave enthusiastically and smile brightly so her little girl knew she was watching. Ivy would beam back and wave before going back to her lesson.

El hummed in contentment and placed a kiss onto the top of James's sun hat. She watched her daughter for a while and sighed, thinking of the memories she had seen of herself at a similar age in mama's memories. That moment mama had found her in the nursery with Kali.

Being a mother now, El understood that she would do anything for her children, she loved them unconditionally. It only made it more heart breaking when she thought about mama and the sacrifice she had made trying to get El back.

She found herself holding James tighter wanting him safe and secure in her hold whilst she watched Ivy and Mike without barely blinking. They were her whole world and the reason she woke up every day with a smile on her face. She knew that just like mama, she would do everything in her power to always keep them safe, to always make them feel loved and wanted.

August 2000

It was another blisteringly hot day in Indiana; the sky was bright blue without a cloud in sight, and the grass had dried out into a shade of yellow caused by the heat wave that the town was experiencing.

It was reminiscent of any other summer day except for one *very* monumental detail. It was Ivy's first day of kindergarten.

"Now be nice to your teachers sweetie and friendly to the other children, they're going to be just as nervous as you." El said anxiously, looking up at Ivy who was sitting happily on Mike's shoulders as they approached the Hawkins school.

The nervous parents had dropped James off at Karen and Ted's, not before Karen had of course taken fifty photos of Ivy and cried through the whole shoot because of how adorable her granddaughter was.

She was right of course, Ivy looked incredibly cute. Her dark hair separated into two braids which were tied off with ribbons that matched her yellow summer dress. She had on white frilly socks and a pair of yellow ballerina style flat shoes.

"And if anyone is mean to you, you just tell your teacher okay?" El added as she watched Ivy apprehensively, missing the amused smirk that Mike was giving her as they approached the front entrance to the kindergarten.

"Okay mommy," Ivy answered, not losing her smile as her amber eyes widened and took in all of the new sights of her school.

Just as they entered the building Ivy nudged at Mike's cheek with her hand, "daddy I can walk now." She said almost dramatically making El's anxiety levels drop for a moment as she smiled at her daughter's obvious need to look cool in front of the other kids.

Mike sighed, clearly torn between wanting to let her go, his emotional turmoil present for a moment before he reached up for their little girl and brought her down to the ground. "Will you still let me hold your hand at least?" he implored her, smiling gently whilst Ivy considered his question.

She looked around, her eyes on the other children entering the building. Most of them were holding hands with their parents, running wild down the hallway or crying at the separation. Ivy turned back to her own parents and grinned, eagerly taking Mike and El's spare hand as she was also carrying their daughter's new backpack.

"Are you excited?" Mike asked Ivy enthusiastically as he and El repeatedly swung her back and forth with their arms whilst she giggled loudly.

"Yes!" Ivy immediately answered looking between her mom and dad.

"I hope I find a friend right away because I want to tell them about James and then I'll show them my baby." She said happily whilst Mike snorted in amusement.

"She brought her Baby Born?" he muttered to El who grinned and looked at her husband.

"*And her Furby.*"

"Don't lost that Furby Ivy," Mike frowned looking down at their daughter. "It wasn't cheap."

Ivy blinked in confusion and looked up at Mike, "but daddy, *Santa* got me my Furby."

El gave her husband a reprimanding look and he coughed awkwardly averting his eyes, "um, well I'm sure Santa wouldn't want you to lose it..."

Ivy nodded, distracted from the conversation as they pulled up to her class. The children already in the large playroom were running around or sulking in corners. The teacher was standing by the door greeting children and their parents, Mike and El waited patiently whilst Ivy jumped up and down eager to go and play.

"And who is this little lady?" the teacher finally asked when the Wheeler's moved to the front.

"Ivy Wheeler," El immediately answered, her and Mike shaking hands with the teacher.

"Ivy *Jane* Wheeler," Their daughter corrected with an excited grin. "And I'm four and three quarters. *Honest!*"

The teacher smiled kneeling down so that she was at the dark haired cutie's level. "Welcome to Kindergarten Ivy, I'm Miss Mason and I'm going to be your teacher this year." She said brightly.

"Hi Miss Mason," Ivy greeted, smiling brightly before her eyes drifted into the classroom. "Can I go and play now?"

Miss Mason chuckled and stood back up, "of course you can Ivy, but

say goodbye to your mommy and daddy first."

This was the moment El had been dreading, she had been imagining it for weeks and had barely slept all night thinking of the separation from her daughter. Yes, she worked in the hospital as a Nurse and was separated from Ivy and James for at least three days of the week, but this was different.

This was Ivy starting her first big adventure. It symbolised her growing up and El didn't know if she was ready for that. It only felt like yesterday that it was the horrendous snow storm on January 5th, 1996 when El gave birth to their only daughter and now she was starting school.

Seeing El's hesitation Mike stepped forward first, kneeling down to engulf Ivy into a tight embrace. "I want you to behave pumpkin and make friends if you can, okay? I love you baby." His voice was choked without a doubt, but he seemed to be keeping it together as he kissed Ivy's cheek and nuzzled his nose into her hair for a moment.

"I love you too daddy," Ivy's muffled voice came from Mike's shoulder before he hesitantly pulled away from her whilst their daughter turned to El with such a soft smile that it melted her heart on the spot.

El sniffled, blinking rapidly to try and stop her tears from falling. Instead of leaning down and hugging Ivy, she scooped her up into her chest. Ivy wrapped her arms and legs around El who lay her cheek against her daughter's. She closed her eyes and just tried to memorise this moment of holding her baby girl in her arms before she would be too grown up to do this anymore.

"I love you Ivy, have the *best* first day." El's voice quaked but she planted kisses against her daughter's smooth temple and along her dark strands of hair.

She felt Ivy nod her head before pulling back enough from El's chest to look at her mother. "I love you mommy. I'm going to have the best day and show *everyone* my toys." She said proudly making Mike and El both laugh, albeit slightly choked.

El sighed feeling more assured that Ivy really was going to have a good day and that they would get to hear about every single detail when they picked her up with James. She gave her daughter a final squeeze and a kiss and then finally let her go out of her arms. Giving Ivy the new backpack they had bought for her and watching as she ran into the classroom.

Mike and El immediately grasped each other's hands and moved up to the glass, watching as Ivy went to a table of children who were playing with Lego. Where she got her confidence from El wasn't sure, although she suspected it could be down to grandpa Hopper.

The tears didn't come until Mike put his arm around El and she immediately leaned into his chest whilst they walked away from the classroom and towards the exit. He kissed the top of her head gently whilst she sniffled and wiped at her tears with the hand that wasn't around her husband's waist.

It wasn't until they got into the car that El realised Mike had tears in his eyes too. He leaned back against the headrest and closed his eyes. "That was harder than I thought it would be," he admitted in a thick voice.

El lay her hand on his jean clad thigh drawing gentle circles with her thumb. "I knew this day would come, but I didn't think it would happen *this* quickly."

Mike sighed and opened his wet eyes, turning his gaze onto El and smiling softly. "One minute she was coming into the world scaring the crap out of us and now she's running into classrooms and probably scaring the crap out of the other kids."

El chuckled lightly, taking a deep breath before Mike leaned in and wiped away her tear tracks with his thumb. His hand cupped her cheek and El immediately leaned into his touch, keeping his gaze.

"There's no one else I would want to share these memories with than you." Mike murmured tenderly, his tone loving and gentle.

El's heart swooned and she found a sappy grin quirking on her lips. "You're so perfect Mike," she said quietly, her words for him only.

"You are the most amazing husband and I didn't think life could get any better, but now I get to see you as a daddy to our children. It's everything I always wanted with you."

Mike grinned, his eyes bright and happy before he leaned in and pressed their lips together. El sighed contently before moving closer. They shared a soft kiss, their lips tugging at one another in a perfect melody before Mike tilted his head slightly to deepen the kiss.

El's heart was pounding, her body filling with adrenaline and desire heating her veins. It was crazy how attractive Mike was, every day he just seemed to get more handsome.

When they finally pulled away, slightly breathless and their skin tingling, El slowly smirked. "So...do you want to go home for a couple of hours before we pick up James?"

"Get your seatbelt on babe!" Mike immediately responded, a mischievous grin on his face as he hurried to start the car whilst El laughed at his enthusiasm and clicked in her belt just before he sped off, as eager as a teenager to get back to their empty house.

December 2001

It was a week before Christmas and whilst El worked incredibly hard dealing with an increasing number of patients, Mike Wheeler felt like he had a much harder task at home with a certain terrible two year old.

The day had started off well, James and Ivy behaving at breakfast, Mike making sure his son ate his scrambled eggs instead of mashing the protein against the wooden surface. He got them both dressed, explaining to Ivy that mommy was already at work and she'd be home soon.

Feeling accomplished Mike dropped off Ivy at her friend Ashley's house for a play date before returning to the car, checking on James and then consulting the folded list El had given him the night before.

It was Ivy's Christmas list and El had already ticked off everything

but *one* thing. That one thing was driving them both crazy and it was Tekno the Robotic Puppy. After Ivy had seen the commercial for the dog whilst watching Rugrats, she hadn't stopped talking about it. How she had been a really good girl that year and hopefully Santa would get her the puppy.

What Mike and El hadn't realised was how popular this damn dog would be. El had tried the town's toy store and the mall to no avail, and then tried to order it over the phone for the company to say it was out of stock and only a few retailers had them left.

Mike sighed and tucked the list into his pocket, putting on his seat belt and turning to look at James who was sitting in the back on his booster seat and scribbling on his Etch a Sketch.

"Right buddy, we're going on a bit of a trip, okay? Are you going to behave?"

James didn't look up at Mike, his lower lip stuck out slightly and his smooth brow creased in concentration on his toy. "Yes daddy," he mumbled not giving Mike much faith that his behaviour would be angelic.

The journey to Toys R Us took 40 minutes, a lot longer than either Mike or James wanted to be in the car for. His son soon got bored with his Etch a Sketch and moved onto playing with his toy cars, driving them over his knees and shouting, "beep, beep!"

Mike smiled and kept glancing back at James whilst focusing on the road.

"Daddy beep, beep!" James whined pointing towards the steering wheel.

Mike chuckled and pretended to push the horn whilst saying "beep, beep!" James giggled and swung his legs back and forth.

The rest of the journey went without too much complaint from the toddler who would say "daddy" every 30 seconds, even if it was just to say the word. His hazel eyes turned onto the window and he watched the views for a while muttering to himself whilst Mike

grinned wondering how he had ended up so lucky with the perfect wife and children.

They arrived at Toys R Us and Mike pulled up in the parking lot, getting an eager James out of his booster seat. "Do you want to walk or for daddy to carry you?" Mike asked his son patiently.

"Walk," James replied with a cute smile whilst he was placed down on the floor. They only made it a few feet of Mike holding his son's hand before James whined and tugged at his jeans. "No daddy. Up daddy." He gestured his hands up and Mike rolled his eyes in amusement, heaving his son up and sitting him on his hip as they walked into Toys R Us.

It didn't take long for Mike to realise that the store was out of Tekno the Robotic Puppy and listened to the sales attendant who gave him directions to the nearest Walmart whilst James started to get unsettled on his hip, his eyes on the toys in the store.

When Mike put James back into the booster seat he cried, trying to escape and screaming when he was finally strapped in. He was kicking out with his legs and caught Mike's arm.

"No James," he told him sternly. "We do *not* hit, *okay?*"

James huffed and sniffled, a weak and feeble "okay..." coming out of his mouth.

Mike drove on, his own mood dipping because of the whining of his son and the insistence of his daughter needing this stupid dog from Santa. *It's not even like we're going to get credit for all this effort and emotional stress!*

Walmart looked incredibly busy if the parking lot was anything to go by and Mike groaned trying to find a space which took longer than either he or James could deal with. His son was shouting, "daddy out! Daddy out!" on repeat whilst Mike considered changing his name.

"We won't be long," Mike sighed tiredly as he lifted James out again. He wasn't even in the supermarket yet and he was already dreading it, deciding that if the dog wasn't here then they would just give it up

as a bad job and try again another day.

As soon as they were in the toy section James wanted to get down, and it was a moment in life that Mike knew he would *always* regret. He let his son down, holding his hand tightly whilst his dark amber eyes lingered over the toys to find the stupid dog.

With a massive rush of relief Mike saw a handful of Tekno the Robotic Puppy and hurried over with James to grab one. "Thank god," he exhaled, closing his eyes for a moment whilst trying to ignore the migraine that was on its way.

He didn't realise until they were in the queue for the cashier that James was holding a colourful dinosaur, which ironically El had bought the same toy last week as one of their son's Christmas presents.

Mike leaned down to face James and reached for the soft toy, "bud you don't need that okay? Daddy's going to put it to the side now." His hand clamped on the dinosaur, but James had a firm grip too.

"No daddy!" He shouted, clinging onto the plush toy like it was a matter of life or death.

Mike knew that there were people in the queue behind him watching the whole scene and he tried to not let it bother him as he reprimanded his son. "James, daddy said *no*." He tugged slightly and released the toy.

For a second he thought he had succeeded on getting through to his terrible two year old. He even managed to smile in relief that he was basically Mary Poppins until his son's face completely crumbled, tears springing out of his eyes.

Oh shit.

James flung himself onto the floor and screamed, his eyes red, his cheeks wet and his fists hitting the linoleum floor. The whole of the queue was watching, and Mike's own cheeks burned in embarrassment.

"Stop it James," Mike pleaded leaning down and trying to pick up his

son whilst hold onto the box of the freaky robot dog. James continued to scream and cry even when Mike picked him up. Other people in the queue cleared their throats or tutted, making Mike feel like the worst parent in the whole world.

James didn't stop screaming and writhing in Mike's arms while they were stuck in the queue, when they reached the checkout and when they got to the car.

Mike threw the bag onto the passenger seat and then strapped his little gremlin into the seat. "You've been a naughty boy James, time out when we get home." He said sternly, his head pounding from the screams that came from his son.

He hoped James would tire himself out on the way home, but that boy just went on and on and on. Mike felt like crying too, gripping the steering wheel and considering dropping James off with Hopper at the station and locking himself in one of the holding cells just to have some peace.

Mercifully Mike finally parked up outside of his garage and got out of the car, grabbing the Walmart bag and opening the back door to stare at James for a moment who had stopped crying, but his lower lip was wobbling.

"James," Mike said calmly, his voice tired. "If you say sorry to daddy now, you don't have to do time out. Okay?"

"No." James said stubbornly.

Mike rolled his eyes and sighed, "right, well it's the naughty step then." He got James out kicking and screaming and took him into the house, chucking the Walmart bag by the front door and taking his terrible toddler to the bottom step of the stairs.

He struggled to get James to sit but eventually he was slumped on the step. He had stopped crying again and was sniffing, an occasional cute hiccup coming out of him. Mike took a deep breath and tried to remember his parenting skills despite his pounding head.

"James, you're in time out because – "

James interrupted Mike by giggling. He frowned at his son and shook his head. "No this isn't funny James. You were a naughty boy today. We can't have every toy James and we *don't* act like that."

James giggled again, and Mike groaned, his head falling forward in defeat. How was this going to work if his son wouldn't stop laughing at him?! He bit his lip wondering if he needed to be firmer.

"James you are going to sit here and be quiet until you can say sorry to daddy." Mike said as sternly as he could manage. He must have sounded angry because James's eyes widened and Mike's heart broke.

It was those eyes. Those hazel eyes that Mike would do anything for.

Feeling regret Mike turned around facing the front door. It took about ten seconds for him to realise James had moved from the step. "Get back now!" he called to his son, hoisting him up and putting him back down on the step. He faltered again looking at James's pleading hazel eyes and bit his lip. *This wasn't fair.*

Mercy came with the sound of the front door being unlocked.

"Hey babe," El called tiredly not seeing her son behind Mike. "Any luck with the – "

She didn't get to finish her sentence before Mike reached for her, bringing El into a bone crushing hug and laying his head on her shoulder, groaning with relief at her return.

"Are you *okay*?" She laughed in confusion and surprise as she hugged him back and stroked his dark locks.

"Our son..." Mike started weakly. "Is a menace."

El frowned and reached onto her tip toes to look over Mike's shoulder and found that their toddler was escaping from the stairs and rushing over to the toy box. She sighed and looked at her exhausted husband. "Were you trying to give him a time out?"

"It's the eyes!" Mike exploded with frustration. "I love him so much, but he's been a little sh - "

"Language."

"He kicked off in Walmart because I wouldn't let him have a dinosaur. He was on the *floor* El, screaming and crying in front of *everyone*." Mike practically sobbed. "And then he screamed all the way through the queue, through buying that damn dog, which I've got by the way. He cried all the way home and laughed at me when I tried to give him time out. And *then* he gave me the *eyes*!"

El listened to her husband patiently, her eyes sympathetic as he explained how bad James had been. She understood completely, easily imagining the scene. Their little boy was wonderful, he truly was, but he was also a toddler. Pushing the boundaries and figuring out what it meant to be two; Ivy had been the same.

"It's okay baby," El assured Mike leaning up to give him a tender kiss which immediately seemed to lift his spirit. "I'll deal with him today."

El took a deep breath, Mike physically seeing her go into mom mode as she squared her shoulders and went over to their son who was pulling all of his toys out of the box. "James come here *now*." She told him sternly.

James looked at her, pouting slightly but he didn't argue. Dropping his toys and taking her hand. El led him to the stairs and sat him down.

"James, you were a naughty boy for daddy today and acted very silly. You're in time out for a minute and if you misbehave it will be longer. Understand?"

James looked sullen but dipped his head, pouting his lower lip out comically. Mike and El turned around and immediately heard him whinge and move to get off the stairs.

El huffed and turned around, pointing her finger at her son. "James Michael Wheeler! You sit back down!"

James struggled against an invisible force and shouted, "*no* mommy!" Despite his young age he knew she was using her powers on him. El rarely used her powers, especially on her own children, but she was

extremely in control of her abilities and knew it was more like two hands keeping her son down rather than a powerful force. She was always gentle with her children.

James finally gave up, allowing El to remove her powers from the equation whilst turning back around with Mike, both of them counting out a minute.

When James's time was up, both his parents knelt down in front of his moping face. "Baby you were in time out because you acted very naughty today. We don't kick or scream okay?"

James hiccupped and nodded his little head of dark locks making El's heart melt. Whilst Mike had trouble with the hazel eyes making him soft, El found it increasingly difficult to reprimand her mini Mike. He was just adorable despite being a terrible two year old.

"Now say sorry to daddy." El said calmly.

James looked to Mike whose expression was just as gentle as El's. "Sorry daddy." He said in his sweet voice.

Mike sighed and immediately pulled James to his chest. "Thank you, baby," he breathed out, nuzzling up to his son and kissing his head.

El smiled warmly watching her boys. She knew using her powers wasn't an orthodox way to keep James in time out and she realised Mike needed to see past the fact that James had her eyes when trying to discipline him. She was also aware that their beautiful boy could be a terror at times. But El wouldn't change a thing of it.

They weren't perfect, none of them were.

But they were perfectly *imperfect* and that was all that El could ever want.

December 2003

It was Christmas eve and the whole party had gathered at Mike and El's house. Max and Lucas had flown in from California with seven year old Ryan and three year old Zach, so the group was *finally*

complete again.

Whilst the party didn't need an excuse to be together, this time was special as it was the first time Max and Lucas were meeting the newest addition to the party, Benjamin Edward Wheeler who was born on December 17th.

"Please tell me you're done now," Max teased before cooing over Ben who clutched onto her hand whilst lying on his playmat looking around curiously.

El grinned from where she knelt down next to Max, doing the buttons up on Ben's baby grow and watching her youngest baby with complete love. "He was my easiest birth, but yes we're done now."

Feeling complete was an odd concept until you *felt* it. El couldn't really describe it, but when Ben was born her heart felt totally full. All the people she would truly love were tucked safely within it and she had never felt happier.

"I'm going to guess Mike picked the baby grow?" Max laughed, her blue eyes lingering on the image of Yoda and the bold letters, "too cute I am".

"Of course," El chuckled before leaning forward and bringing Ben up, supporting his head and peppering kisses onto his soft face. Unlike his siblings Ben was the only one to have inherited El's honey locks, despite the fact that he had so little at this stage. But his eyes were similar to Ivy's at the same age so El was confident he would have the amber orbs she loved so dearly.

The whole party seemed to be spread around the house. James and his five year old twin cousins Lily and Grace were bouncing on the trampoline despite the bitter temperatures whilst Jen kept an eye on them.

Zach and Sam who were the same age, were giggling loudly as they chased each other around the slide and shouted, "ready, steady, go!" to one another. Laura laughed as she watched them both.

Mike, Will, Dustin and Lucas were stood by the back door, the men

all sipping from mugs of coffee and watching the children with warm smiles whilst they caught up with each other.

"So how are the sleepless nights treating you Mike?" Lucas teased nudging the Paladin's shoulder.

Mike was definitely showing signs of having three children under eight years old, especially one of them being a new born. But he smiled despite the bags under his eyes. "It's worth every second." He answered.

"Ben is so cute though." Dustin grinned. "He *almost* makes me want another."

"You *should*. Kids are the best," Mike answered, his eyes on James who was laughing and playing nicely with his cousins.

"Nah," Dustin sighed shaking his head as he watched his own son and wife. "We're too busy with work, it wouldn't be fair. We do so much with Sam you know, but I can't imagine splitting our time with any more."

"I'm happy with my girls," Will said, his eyes light and happier than Mike had ever seen them as he watched his cute twins and Jen.

"And I'm happy with my boys." Lucas added with a happy sigh before shuddering. "Besides, I couldn't cope with pregnant Max again."

The boys all laughed, a warm feeling spreading within them at finally being reunited. It was hard Lucas and Max being the only ones to now live out of state. Their absence was always felt.

"Daddy!" called Ivy making Mike blink and turn to where his daughter was running out of the house with Ryan. Those two were inseparable when they were together, and they had been up in Ivy's room for the three hours that Max, Lucas and Zach had been in the house.

"Yes sweetheart?" Mike answered, all of the men turning their attention onto Ivy and Ryan who were out of breath from running.

"Can me and Ryan play in the woods? Mommy told me to ask you

because she was feeding Ben."

Mike frowned, his eyes turning towards the woods. It was sadly a different time now to when he and the boys played in the woods. There were threats and safety issues that weren't as much of a big deal back in the 80's.

They didn't have any neighbours for miles, it was how El liked it, but it didn't mean that the woods didn't attract people now and again.

"What do you think?" Mike muttered quietly to Lucas.

His best friend looked at his son for a moment and shrugged, "it's fine with me, as long as they stay in sight."

Mike nodded in agreement and turned to the seven year olds. "Play in the woods if you want, but we want to be able to see you *both* okay? If you can't see us, then you've gone too far."

Ivy grinned, "thanks daddy!" She then grabbed Ryan's hand and they raced into the woods, their laughter echoing around the trees as they played.

Mike watched them both closely, tuning out of the boys conversations for a while whilst he focused on keeping Ivy and Ryan in sight. He was extremely protective of all of his children, it was in his nature of course. But with Ivy Mike would admit he was even *more* protective. He didn't know if it was because she was almost identical to El, or that she was his only daughter or that she was a daddy's girl.

No matter what the reason was, he didn't just want her to be safe as he did with James and Ben. He always had to worry about another factor, something he hoped wasn't going to be a problem for a *very* long time. But it was terrifying all the same.

"Stop glaring daggers at my son," Lucas joked making Mike flinch, coming out of his daze and turning to his best friends who were all laughing at him.

"Huh?" Mike asked in confusion, suddenly feeling a blush creeping up his cheeks under his friends amused gazes.

"Dude, Ryan is *seven*, he's not exactly pulling the moves on your daughter." Dustin teased whilst the boys all chuckled.

Mike sighed and rubbed at the back of his neck, his eyes averting again to Ivy and Ryan to make sure they were still in sight. "I was just...I don't know. Will you've got girls, you understand right?" He practically pleaded with his brother in law.

Will shrugged, "sorry man, but my girls are five. I haven't got to worry about this kind of stuff just yet."

"Worry about what?" El's voice carried over to the boys as she walked over with Ben wrapped up asleep in a blanket, Max by her side.

Dustin sniggered and answered before Mike could explain. "Your husband is concerned that Ryan is going to serenade your daughter."

"Dustin!" Mike frowned, "that's not what – "

"And what's wrong with my son?" Max scoffed, crossing her arms and glaring at Mike who rolled his eyes in exasperation.

"Nothing's *wrong* with Ryan. You know I love that kid." Mike reasoned. "It's just..."

"He's protective of her." El answered for her husband making him smile in relief and love that she just *got* him. She always understood and always had, no matter what the situation was.

"Thanks babe," Mike said softly, walking over to El and putting his arm around her, kissing her gently before leaning down and kissing the top of Ben's honey strands of hair.

Mike looked at his friends and sighed, "I think we all see how close Ivy and Ryan are and it just makes me worry they will grow up too quick. They deserve to be kids for as long as they can, we *all* had to grow up so fast."

The others nodded in agreement before becoming distracted by Ryan's shout of glee as Ivy used her powers to make a pile of frozen leaves hover through the air in front of her best friend.

Mike smiled softly watching them, knowing that Ivy was safe in front of this wonderful group of people to use her powers freely. He remembered how two years ago her powers had shown themselves for the first time.

They had been sitting around the dinner table, just a normal evening when Ivy asked if she could feed James his pasta. El and Mike had eagerly accepted, happy to see her helping out with her little brother. But instead of picking up the spoon, it levitated, greatly entertaining her brother before it flew towards him and he opened his mouth obediently.

Mike and El had gaped at each other in shock, El's face ashen. "A-Are *you* doing that Ivy?" Mike had choked out, staring at his daughter in astonishment.

Ivy had beamed proudly, nodding her head before continuing the process. However, whilst she was happy, El had looked devastated, especially when a small trickle of blood came from Ivy's nose and they asked her to stop.

Their daughter became upset too, thinking she had done something wrong and ran off to her room. Mike had gone to talk to her, but El said she would.

El had snuggled with Ivy telling her why she had reacted in shock, explaining how she had never wanted to pass on her powers to her babies, how it was a gift that couldn't be shared with people because there were risks. Only those they trusted with every fibre of their being could know.

But now when Mike looked down at his wife, he was happy to see she accepted that her powers had passed on to their children. It wasn't something to be ashamed of or feared, at least by those they cared for dearly.

And Mike felt his own relief wash over him as he watched Ryan's amazed face. No matter what, Ivy would always have a best friend who would never think she was anything else but special.

The toddler tantrum is inspired by my nephew. I went into Toys R Us with him and had a *great* time. Ha!

Shout out to my mum who got me a Tekno the Robotic Puppy for Christmas 2000. I think I played with it for two weeks and got bored. I'M SORRY MUM!

I joined Tumblr! I literally have NO idea what I'm doing so far, but my username is fangirlingstrangerthings so I'm sure you can find me if you want to :-)

Please consider leaving a review because feedback is EVERYTHING to a writer :-D

11. Missing Moments 11

The Life You Deserve Missing Moments

AN: So, we've arrived at the last Missing Moments chapter! :-(

I've had a lot of fun making this series and I want to thank each and every one of you for your suggestions, and I am really sorry if I haven't included one that you suggested.

Also thank you SO much to each and every one of you who has commented/reviewed, favoured/left a kudos. You are amazing and have kept me motivated!

This chapter is hopefully going to be light, fluffy and give us some suggestions for the future ;-)

Prompts included in this chapter are from *paladinandmage*, *The Clown*, *Hannah*, *MC* and *ElevenEggs*.

But first you all get a bonus scene that I couldn't fit into the last chapter and because I love you all :-D

Bonus Scene

October 2007

It was leading up to be the best Halloween Mike had had in years. Of course, taking the kids trick or treating every year with El was *always* fun, but tonight was even more special because the whole party was in attendance including all of their children. They were once again whole, and nothing made Mike happier than getting to enjoy the best night of the year with his wife, children, best friends and all of their kids.

"Dad! You *stole* my '3 Musketeers' bar!" 7-year-old Sam Henderson whined to Dustin. His usually curly blonde hair was slicked back to go with his costume of Draco Malfoy. He wasn't the only *Harry Potter* inspired character that night. Zach Sinclair who was the same age as Sam was dressed as Ron Weasley complete with ginger wig, 9-year-

old Lily Byers was Hermione Granger whilst her twin Grace Byers was Ginny Weasley. And that left 8-year-old James Wheeler as Harry Potter, not that he seemed to mind being the lead character with his fake circular glasses and the lightning bolt scar that El had sketched onto his forehead earlier in the evening.

Dustin chuckled at his son's exasperation at having his favourite chocolate bar plucked out of the pillow case holding his hoard of treats acquired so far that night. "Don't worry you will get more!" he called to Sam whilst munching on the stolen chocolate and grinning at Laura who was giving her childish husband an amused smirk.

Mike looked around at all of the kids smiling to himself at how random all of the costumes were, there was hardly any uniformity to their looks. Of course there was the *Harry Potter* outfits, but then 11 year old Ivy and Ryan who were walking ahead of everyone else were dressed as Troy and Gabriella from *High School Musical*. It honestly made Mike want to roll his eyes when he thought of his daughter's bedroom and how it was now plastered with posters of Zac Efron. It made him shudder that he even knew who Zac Efron was.

Whilst Mike knew his daughter was obsessed with the Disney movie, he didn't honestly think Ryan was that bothered by it. But just like Mike could never say no to El, it appeared that the oldest Sinclair child had the same problem with Ivy.

It was kind of unsettling to Mike who knew more than anyone what it was like to fall in love at such a young age. He didn't think he was ready for it to happen to his daughter. The only thing that seemed to calm Mike down was the fact that Ryan of course lived in California, so he only had to see his daughter and best friend's son together in the summer or in the holidays and surely that wasn't enough time to fall in love...right? Denial was a wonderful thing.

There was a little bark and Mike looked down to the puppy he was leading as they walked into Loch Nora. Earlier in the summer one of the local farms welcomed a litter of Labrador puppies and Mike had begged El for them to get one, stating the kids would love it, even though he secretly had always wanted a dog himself. El had took one look at the adorable puppies and immediately agreed.

They brought along the kids and picked an excitable little female Labrador with a golden coat. Mike was instantly in love, sitting on the floor of the pen whilst the puppy jumped on his chest and licked his face.

"Aw she already knows who her daddy is," El had swooned watching her husband with the puppy. Mike chuckled in response and stroked the puppy whilst Ivy, James and 4-year-old Ben gathered around in awe.

"Can we have one *each*?" James asked excitedly, his eyes wide with delight as he looked around at all of the puppies.

El laughed and shook her head, leaning down and helping Ben to gently stroke the female puppy. "No sweetie, just one." She said stern but fair. James nodded in acceptance and smiled lovingly at the puppy.

"What should we call her?" Mike asked their children, grinning at his daughter and sons.

"Eggo." Ben immediately answered in his sweet voice. He was smiling ecstatically at the playful puppy.

Mike looked up at El, meeting her eye, both of them smirking. "Eggo it is." He said happily, stroking the newest addition to the Wheeler household.

It only took a day before Dustin who had melted at the sight of little Eggo immediately beseeched Laura stating that they needed a puppy too. For Sam of course...

Out of the mixed litter they picked one of Eggo's brothers, a black Labrador that they called Dart. Mike and El rolled their eyes in amusement whilst Laura stared at her husband in confusion. "So, you're telling me you're naming our puppy after a creature from a parallel dimension that *ate* your mom's cat?"

"Yeah," Dustin replied with a warm smile as he stared down at Dart the black Labrador playing with his sister, both of them chewing on a squeaky toy.

Both puppies were now on leads being walked by their new dad's and dressed in matching Ewok costumes. They matched the adults who were all nostalgically dressed in *Star Wars* outfits. Mike couldn't help but smile lovingly at El in her Princess Leia costume, her hair in two buns looking so similar to how she had appeared on her first Halloween with the party in her long white dress. No amount of years could take her beauty, she was ethereal.

Ben was the only one out of the group of children who matched the adults, looking completely adorable in his Yoda costume as he held onto El's hand whilst they knocked at the first house in the expensive Loch Nora neighbourhood.

They were making their way to the fourth house when there was a shout of, "good evening children! And mini children!"

Mike looked up with the rest of the group to see Steve and Robin dressed as vampires, waving over whilst their 9-year-old son Tyler ran over to greet Lily and Grace who were in the same grade. Will's eyes narrowed slightly as he watched over his girls protectively. 7-year-old Chloe Harrington stayed next to her parents, but her eyes were on a certain boy. "Hi James," she said quietly, her pink blush being concealed by the dark night as she waved gently to Mike's and El's oldest son who quickly averted his eyes whilst Zach and Sam sniggered.

"Hi Chloe," James coughed awkwardly. Mike and El shared a look of amusement, knowing that their son hated being teased by his friends for Chloe Harrington's supposed crush on him. He was a year older than her and apparently a year's difference was like 10 years in elementary school.

Steve and Robin came over, hugging all of the adults and laughing with each other about their different costumes. Tyler was dressed like a vampire too and made the twins laugh, Mike smirked knowing how much Will hated how suave the mini Steve was already whilst Lily and Grace giggled. Jen gripped her husband's arm whispering to him that Tyler was harmless, he was only 9 for heaven's sake! Mike didn't have long to think about it though when he noticed his own daughter trying to sneak off with Ryan.

"And where are you two going?" he asked sceptically, crossing his arms and raising his eyebrow at Ivy and Ryan, causing Max, Lucas and El to look over at their children too whilst Dustin talked animatedly with Steve.

Ivy blushed at being caught and shrugged her shoulders, "we just want to carry on trick or treating." She answered casually.

"Well you can wait for us," Mike answered as sternly as he could whilst he watched his daughter huff and roll her eyes. Ryan smiled at her and shrugged his shoulders in a gesture of "*what can you do?*" She seemed to calm down then and smiled softly back at him whilst Mike immediately found himself frowning again.

"When did our daughter become a teenager? That's not allowed, she's only 11." Mike muttered to El who was by his side. She chuckled gently and laced her fingers with his in support.

"Babe she's not doing anything wrong, she just wants to trick or treat." El said reasonably her eyes warm as she watched their daughter talking quietly with Ryan. "Plus, they probably think we look embarrassing."

"Well more fool them, because we look amazing." Max countered, smirking to herself as she appraised her son for a moment.

Mike sighed, "I just want them to be our babies again. You know?" he said vulnerably turning to look at El, Max and Lucas who all nodded silently in agreement. While he loved seeing his children grow and learn new things, it was still a blow to his heart the more independent they became, not needing their dad anymore.

"I'm still your baby," came a little voice making the adults look down to see a smiling Ben, his little green ears of his costume making him appear even cuter than he already was. Mike chuckled, his heart filling immediately with warmth. El took Eggo's lead with a grin allowing her husband to scoop up their giggling 4-year-old.

"Yes, you are buddy!" Mike smiled happily as he peppered kisses over Ben's face whilst he laughed loudly, kicking and shouting in glee as his dad threw him in the air. "My little boy," Mike said adoringly as

he placed one more kiss on Ben's smooth forehead and sat his son on his hip as they carried on trick or treating.

With Ben in his arms, El's hand in his, their little puppy leaping with every step and James and Ivy laughing and smiling with their friends, Mike felt a proud and thankful feeling consuming him.

His dark amber eyes lingered on El and he sighed happily, without her he wouldn't have any of this. He wouldn't have the honour to be called her husband, he wouldn't have the pride telling people that he was a dad to three children, he wouldn't ever be this happy. His family and friends truly were everything and the feeling resonating inside of him was made up of one word, *complete*.

Missing Moment 11

July 2009

El hummed to herself as she wandered around her kitchen making a fruit salad for the kids who were all playing in the back garden with the slip and slide that Mike had set up for them. Their household usually consisting of three children and one excitable dog had tripled. Lucas and Max were out for lunch with his parents to have a serious discussion about Mr Sinclair's retirement and had dropped Ryan and Zach off with Mike and El.

Knowing that the other kids were all together, Lily, Grace and Sam who was holding onto an excitable Dart had instantly appeared, big smiles on their faces as they ran into the backyard to join their cousins and friends. Once El had called Laura and Jen to make sure they would know where the kids were, she felt more at ease at having all of the children together, smiling happily when she saw them playing together so well.

El felt bad for Ben because there was a much bigger age gap for him then any of the other children, so there was a tendency for him to get left behind at times. But 11-year-old Lily and Grace seemed to be at the age where they adored their 6-year-old cousin, happy to play with him and show him new things like how to do cartwheels and roll down the grass slope in the back yard.

It was to the sound of children's laughter that El finished preparing the fruit salad, a content smile on her face. She jumped when two long arms suddenly appeared and immediately wrapped around her waist pulling her against a firm chest. El gasped and then laughed whilst Mike kissed her cheek, smiling against her skin.

"I thought you were meant to be watching the kids," El teased, a grin on her face. "Making sure none of them breaks a limb on that slip and slide."

"They'll be okay for like fifteen minutes..." Mike chuckled, his breath warm and welcoming against her jaw as he peppered soft and lingering kisses to her skin before his mouth dropped down to her neck making her body heat up with a stirring desire. She breathed heavily, closing her eyes as his hands held her more firmly to his body whilst his kisses became more open and thrilling. El bit her lip to contain her pleased grin, loving any moment of intimacy that they could grab.

"And what do you suggest we do with these fifteen minutes?" El teased in a breathy voice, her pulse quickening as Mike nibbled at her throat playfully.

He spun her around, El melting at the mischievous boyish smirk on his perfect lips. While they had got older and more mature, their desire for one another never seemed to fade. It only became more essential as it was harder to find the precious moments to be together intimately when they had three children running around.

Mike's hands gripped against the cotton material of El's dress and he pulled her forward, closing the small gap between them as she wrapped her arms around his neck. He leaned his forehead against hers, his lips just ghosting over her own and making her heart race. "I suggest we – "

"Ew!" Came an affronted squeal causing Mike and El to quickly lift their heads from each other to find their 13-year-old daughter standing by the French doors to the yard with Ryan. Ivy had her hands on her hips and a look of distaste on her face as she looked at her parents whilst poor Ryan just looked incredibly uncomfortable.

"You two are so gross," Ivy shuddered, moving towards the fridge and grabbing two bottles of water whilst Mike and El snorted with laughter.

They watched as Ivy handed a water bottle to Ryan and then grabbed his wrist, pulling him away from her parent's watchful eyes and back into the yard where the rest of the kids were shouting and laughing as they raced each other on the slip and slide.

The moment that Ivy and Ryan were out of sight Mike and El giggled foolishly, shaking their heads in amusement and laying their foreheads back together. "At eighteen did you ever think that in twenty years we would be told off by our daughter for kissing?" Mike asked grinning against El's lips.

She laughed, her eyes bright and beautiful. "Well I hoped that we would get married and have children, so I definitely got that part of the wish." El answered softly, her eyes locking with Mike's.

He smiled gently never taking his gaze off her as he spoke. "I love you."

"I love you too," El grinned happily before leaning in to kiss him.

"Mommy!" came a loud sob from the yard that made Mike and El instantly jump away from each other and rush to the back door. Ben was walking towards the house, tears streaming down his currently red cheeks with Lily holding his left hand whilst he held out his right hand and cried.

"What's wrong baby?" El asked softly, bending down onto her knees, her arms wide open as Ben rushed into her hold and snuggled against her chest whilst she kissed his forehead and rubbed his back.

"He fell on the slip and slide Aunty El," Lily answered for her little cousin, looking down at him in concern.

"I think James trod on his hand," Grace called from the slippery slide that she was currently sitting on whilst James gaped at his cousin in annoyance.

"No, I didn't!"

"You so did James!" Sam chuckled shoving his friend along the slip and slide so that he could move further.

"It was an accident though," Zach added when he noticed Mike frowning at his oldest son.

"James," El said sternly looking up at her mini Mike who was averting his eyes. "Did you hurt your little brother?"

"Um..."

"James," Mike repeated for El, crossing his arms and trying to appear firm. He was still hopeless at discipling, but he did try his best to at least *look* in control, especially in front of his nieces and Sam, Ryan and Zach.

"Tell us what happened please?" El said calmly to James as she handed Ben over to Mike. Their youngest reached up for his dad and then hung on to his back like a koala bear, Mike held onto Ben's skinny legs to stop him from sliding off.

James sighed and looked down at his hands ashamed. "I was going down on the slip and slide with Ben on my knee and then he wanted to go faster...so I used my powers to speed us up and then we both tumbled over and I trod on his hand by accident." His words were mumbled and quiet but El and Mike caught every word.

James had been displaying powers for a year now and whilst feeling fearful over her son having these specific gifts, it had also amazed El and Mike how James's powers seemed to be different. Whilst Ivy's gifts were almost a mirror image of El's, James seemed to have an inner strength with his own body rather than reflecting that strength onto other things like El and Ivy could do.

"I didn't mean to hurt him," James added before looking up at his brother who was poking his head up over Mike's shoulder. "I'm sorry Benny."

"I'm sorry too James." Ben said quietly, his chin nuzzling slightly into his dad's t-shirt. El and Mike shared a glance, both of them smiling slightly with pride that they hadn't even needed to force their boys to

apologise to one another.

After checking that all of the kids were okay, El went back to finishing off the fruit salad whilst Mike changed into his swimming trunks and went on the slip and slide with the children, all under the pretence of 'watching' them.

El was bringing out a plate of sandwiches and couldn't help but beam with happiness as she watched Mike lying flat on the slippery surface whilst James, Ben, the twins, Zach and Sam jumped on him and tried to pull him down the slide by his legs. Mike just laughed the whole time, his handsome face content and joyful. It warmed El's whole heart more than she could ever explain.

She put the plate of sandwiches down on the picnic bench and looked over towards the edge of the yard where Ivy and Ryan were sat crossed legged facing each other, both of them talking avidly, laughing and smiling whilst they stroked Eggo and Dart.

Everything felt serene and perfect. Well...for an hour at least.

Mike yawned loudly, his mouth stretching wide as he loaded the dishwasher after lunch and reminded himself that he was going to need to shower after the soap suds from the slip and slide had made him sticky. Combining that with the heat wave and bits of grass stuck to his skin, he was feeling kind of gross.

"Dad?"

Mike looked up from where he had just loaded a few plates into the dishwasher to find Ivy stood by one of the counters, playing with her fingers nervously whilst she watched him clean up.

"You okay honey?" Mike frowned, his brow creasing as he took in how his daughter's leg was bouncing slightly. Her own anxious display so similar to his own.

Ivy nodded, her amber eyes filled with an emotion that Mike couldn't read, no matter how hard he tried. "Yeah um...I just wanted to ask if it was okay if I went to the movies tomorrow night to watch *Harry*

Potter and the Half Blood Prince?"

"You want to see it again?" Mike chuckled as he loaded more dishes. "I mean it was pretty good, I have to admit." He said more to himself as he thought back a week ago when he, El, their kids, the Henderson's and the Byers had gone to see the newest addition to the *Harry Potter* movie series. Although Mike had already read all of the books and decided that they would always be better.

"I know I've seen it before, but Ryan hasn't..." Ivy said quietly, Mike's attention was immediately back on his daughter as he started to understand what she was asking.

"Do you mean you and Ryan are going to watch the movie...*alone*?"

Ivy coughed awkwardly and looked down at her shoes, "I mean I asked mom and she said for me to ask you." She mumbled whilst Mike tried to deal with his internal struggle. Red sirens were screaming in his ears. No way could he let his 13-year-old daughter, his *only* daughter go out on a date! She was practically still a baby!

"Um," Mike said unintelligently as his slightly wild eyes looked out of the window and searched the yard for El. She was watching over Ben watering the plants for her. "I'm just going to talk to your mom." He said hurriedly, before practically sprinting into the yard.

Mike tried to ignore the fact that Ryan who was showing skate boarding tricks to James and Sam was nervously looking over at him, obviously waiting for the same answer as Ivy.

"Babe," Mike said in a panic the moment he reached his wife who looked up from Ben and smirked at her husband in amusement.

"So, she asked you huh?" El answered playfully whilst Mike huffed in defiance and watched their youngest son for a moment who was pouring way too much water onto a poor plant.

"Why didn't you tell her no?" Mike whined looking back at his wife. "Why did she have to ask *me*?"

El laughed and rolled her eyes, "because I don't have a problem with it and I know that *you* would."

"She's thirteen El. She's way too young to go on a date." Mike said frowning, crossing his arms for good measure and glancing over his shoulder to Ryan who had been staring at him and quickly looked away.

El snorted in laughter, "babe, you sound like my dad." She teased him before poking his arm. "And how old were we when we started dating?"

"We'd just turned fourteen." Mike said smartly, a little smug smile on his face. He didn't want El telling him that Ryan and Ivy could date because they were practically the same age, this was *totally* different. Plus, a year's difference in teenage years was like 20.

"And how old were we when we fell in love?" El asked, her eyebrow arching, daring Mike to defy her. He coughed awkwardly and looked down at the grass.

"Um...well we had just turned thirteen I guess..."

"Exactly." El said triumphantly. "So, if Ivy and Ryan want to go on a date then why should it matter? Anyway, you don't even *know* if it's a date. They are best friends, it is okay for boys and girls to go and watch a movie without romance being involved you know?"

Mike sighed and bit his lower lip, "I know. It's just...come on, have you *seen* those two together? You can't tell me they are just friends." His amber eyes were beseeching to his wife, desperate for her to understand.

El chuckled gently and looked over at Ryan and the boys who had now been joined by Ivy. The older two were whispering and glancing over at Mike and El.

"I think they might have crushes, maybe they don't even know it themselves. But I know they aren't dating." El said contemplatively whilst Mike rolled his eyes and huffed some air out of his nose.

"Well how do you *know* they aren't dating?"

El smiled up at Mike and put her arm around his waist, "because Ivy knows she can talk to me about anything." She said proudly.

Mike snorted, "yeah well, my mom said the same thing to me while I had you hidden in my closet."

El laughed feeling amused and exasperated by her husband's worries over their daughter. He was protective and always had been, but no one could deny that Mike was mostly overprotective of Ivy.

She leaned up and wrapped her arms around Mike's neck whilst his arms draped over her waist and pulled her closer. El watched the torment in his eyes over this whole movie date and tried to ease his tension, she leaned forward and trailed kisses from his cheek to his ear.

"So which time of me being hidden in your closet are you thinking of?" El said smiling against his ear lobe whilst Mike shivered slightly at her warm breath tickling his skin. Her voice turned into a whisper, "the first time I was at your house? Or the time when you and I were –"

"Mommy!" Ben called looking at his empty watering can, he turned his face to his parents. "I think I killed the plant."

Mike and El chuckled, both of them pulling apart and helping their son. A little while later Mike told Ivy he would consider letting her and Ryan go alone to the movies, and even though she rolled her eyes she thanked him.

It was after dropping off the other party member's children that Mike decided to make a detour before going home. He took the memorised route towards the old Byers/Hopper household smiling to himself as he remembered every time he had snuck in the same house to see El. Or how they had become husband and wife just by the edge of the property.

"Hey Hop," Mike called walking into the house and seeing his father in law sat in an armchair with a beer, watching the game on TV.

The retired police chief looked up and smiled at his son in law, "hey Wheeler. Where's my kid? And my grandbabies?"

Mike chuckled walking over and taking a seat on the couch next to

Hopper. "El and the kids are at home. I was just dropping off the twins and the boys and thought I'd come say hi." He said with a sigh before looking around. "Where's Joyce?"

"She's just at the store, she'll be back in like twenty minutes." Hopper answered looking up at the clock for a moment before focusing in on a fidgeting Mike and smirking slightly. "So...wanna tell me why you're really here?"

Mike blinked in confusion and lowered his brow, "I don't know – "

"Kid I was chief for more years than I even want to know and right now I can see you want to talk about something. So, spill it, I'm not getting any younger."

"Ivy wants to go on a date." Mike blurted out, his own eyes widening in surprise at his confession.

There was silence for a moment between the two men, Hopper's eyes were narrowing as he took in what Mike just said. "Ivy? *My* Ivy? My sweet little granddaughter?"

"The very same..." Mike sighed rubbing at his forehead tiredly.

Hopper shook his head in amazement and took a gulp from his bottle of beer. "And let me guess," he said after lowering the drink. "It's with Ryan Sinclair, right?"

Mike spluttered on air, "h-how did you know that?!"

Hopper snorted and looked up at his son in law, "well it's kind of obvious kid. He looks at her, just like another little teenage boy looked at *my* daughter all those years ago."

Mike blushed and looked down at his lap where his hands were knotted tensely together. He looked at his wedding band trying to calm himself down. "How did you um...how did you cope with me? When me and El were teenagers I mean."

Hopper let out a bark of laughter and grinned, sitting back and watching his embarrassed son in law. "Well I think it's fair to say that you weren't going anywhere so I had to just accept it. Obviously, I

gave you shit kid, to scare you and all. But I don't think a college professor has the same fear factor as the chief of police cleaning out his guns." Hopper teased Mike who rolled his eyes.

"You could lend me one of your guns?" Mike practically pleaded. "Maybe I could clean it and try and warn Ryan off?"

Hopper snorted in amusement, "yeah because that's gonna work! The kid won't even be scared of guns. His dad is a cop and his mom...well his mom is *Maxine*."

"Fair point," Mike mumbled being sighing in exasperation. He leaned his head back against the couch cushions and closed his eyes. "So basically, I've just got to accept that my baby girl is growing up and wants to date?" he asked his father in law miserably.

"Pretty much," Hopper sighed frowning himself as he thought about his oldest grandchild and how quickly she was growing up. She really did look just like El if you ignored her dark hair and eyes. A wave of overprotectiveness hit Hopper, something he hadn't truly felt since El was a teenager.

"Or..."

"Or?!" Mike replied with hope, sitting up and opening his eyes to look at Hopper who seemed to be contemplating something.

"You could chaperone them at the movies." Hopper said grinning widely. "Sit in between them, make sure that the Sinclair boy keeps his hands to himself."

Mike suddenly wanted to bow down to his father in law for coming up with the perfect solution. "Hopper, I think I love you."

"I'm lovable," Hopper agreed with a shrug and a smirk.

Ivy was lying on her stomach, singing to herself whilst she painted her nails on her bed. She had gone for a deep red that she secretly hoped Ryan would like, not that she would tell *anyone* that. Well maybe except for her best friend Lisa who knew all of Ivy's secrets, except of course for the biggest one.

"There's always gonna be another mountain, I'm always gonna wanna make it move!" Ivy sang the Miley Cyrus song to herself, her ipod on its docking station shuffling all of her music.

Another voice joined in the singing, "always gonna be an uphill battle! Sometimes I'm gonna have to lose!"

Ivy looked up to see her dad stood in the doorway, a dramatic look on his face as he tried to sing, giving her a playful wink when she tried to bite back a smile at how ridiculous but funny he was.

"Dad," she whined, making the word come out long and slow. "Please don't try and sing *The Climb*."

"Okay," Mike said solemnly making Ivy giggle from how he was mocking being sad. He walked over and sat on the edge of her bed, making Ivy shuffle over slightly so there was room for him.

She watched as her dad observed her room for a moment, taking in her *Harry Potter*, *Twilight* and Zac Efron posters. He fiddled with the fairy lights strung around her head board and cleared his throat. "So, about you and Ryan seeing *Harry Potter*..."

Ivy gulped, her eyes widening in surprise that he already had an answer for her. She had assumed that he would have to sleep on the idea of her seeing a movie alone with Ryan. It wasn't like Ivy expected anything to happen. Ryan was her favourite guy friend and with him living so far away nothing had ever happened between them, even though she wished it could. Besides, Ivy was sure Ryan didn't see her as more than a friend. He had probably asked her to see the movie with him because he didn't want to go with Zach.

"You can see the movie with Ryan – "

"Yes! Thank you dad!" Ivy said happily, sitting up immediately to lean forward and hug him in thanks. Her mind was already going at light speed trying to decide what she should wear when her dad burst the bubble of excitement she was currently feeling.

"You can see the movie with Ryan, but I'm coming too." Mike said before giving his daughter a knowing smile whilst her mouth

dropped open.

"What?" she gasped. "Y-You can't come too!"

"And why not?" Mike challenged her, casually shrugging his shoulders. "I thought it was just two friends watching a movie? Besides, I've known Ryan since he was born, maybe he wants me to come with you guys. I'm his friend too."

Ivy gave her dad a deadpan expression, she didn't want to say that there was *no* way Ryan would want him there because one it would look like a date and two she didn't want to hurt her dad's feelings despite how weird he was being over her seeing a movie with one of her best friends. "Fine," she mumbled, huffing as she crossed her arms in annoyance.

Mike beamed in triumph and leaned forward to mess up Ivy's hair. She groaned and tried to pull away before his stupidly long arm made her curls go haywire. "We'll have fun," he said happily whilst Ivy rolled her eyes. "It'll be like a dad and daughter date but with Ryan there too." He added with a teasing smile, getting up off her bed whilst she tried to nudge him off with her foot.

"You are so annoying." She called to her dad as he moved towards the door.

Mike grinned and looked back at his daughter in all of her teenage angst and hormonal glory. "Love you too baby." He laughed narrowly missing her telekinetically throwing a pillow at him before disappearing down the hall.

Ivy lay back on her bed and groaned in annoyance. Well it certainly wasn't going to be a date *now*! She reached for her phone on her bedside table and immediately typed a quick message to Ryan, her fingers tapping loudly on the screen in frustration.

Ivy: We're on for the movies but sadly we've got a plus one...

Ryan: Who?!

Ivy: My dad....

Ryan: **Well shit.**

Ivy: *I'm sorry Ry, I don't think I can change his mind.*

Ryan: **It's okay V, I'll think of something.**

"Are you looking forward to the movie honey?" Mike asked his daughter, glancing over at her in the passenger seat before indicating into the parking lot for the Starcourt mall.

"Sure dad..." Ivy mumbled rolling her eyes and keeping her view on the mall as Mike found a space and pulled up.

He smiled to himself, taking in her sullen exterior. Mike was sure that Ivy and Ryan would have a good time, if he was there or not. After all it's not like they could have been planning on talking seeing as they were coming to a movie. It wasn't a *big* deal really if he sat in between them, well at least to Mike it wasn't.

"How did Ryan get here?" Mike asked following his daughter into the mall. Ivy was already looking around for her best friend, her neck movements were so quick and rapid that she reminded Mike of a meerkat.

"I think Max was dropping him off," Ivy said absentmindedly as she headed towards the cinema with Mike trailing behind her.

With being way over 6-foot Mike saw Ryan first, looking nervous as he leaned against the wall next to the cinema and as far as he could tell it appeared he was alone.

"Ryan!" Ivy called the moment she set eyes on him. He looked over quickly, a smile replacing the nerves on his face.

"Hey Ivy," he said in response, his voice a little breathy that suddenly made Mike suspicious. Ryan turned his light brown eyes onto the Paladin and gulped quietly. "H-Hi Mike..."

Mike suddenly had the urge to say "*it's Mr Wheeler to you,*" but then Ryan had been calling him Mike since he learnt how to speak, so he doubted the threat would work on the teenage boy. "Hey buddy, you

excited for the movie?" he answered with a smile instead. After all, Ryan wasn't just a potential suitor after his daughter's heart, he was also his best friend's son and genuinely a good guy. *Except for the whole potential suitor for my daughter's heart thing...*

"Yeah I'm really excited," Ryan said having taken a relieved breath that Mike wasn't being confrontational with him. At least not outwardly. "I love the Harry Potter movies. Did you know they're building a Harry Potter World in Florida? Mom said we can go one day." He added enthusiastically, reminding Mike for one moment that he was in fact a young boy still and not the motorcycling bad boy that his mind was making him out to be.

"We should all go." Mike said with a smile, already planning a whole party trip in his mind. Every year the group liked to go away together, even if it was only for a week and somewhere mediocre. It didn't really matter as long as they were all together, but Mike already knew that no one would have an objection about going to Florida.

"That would be so cool!" Ryan answered avidly, his eyes widened with excitement whilst Ivy nodded in agreement, a pretty smile now on her face replacing the solemn angst that had been there earlier.

"What would be cool?" called a familiar female voice. Mike looked up and did a double take when he realised Max was coming over to them with a large popcorn tub in her hands and four tickets in between two of her fingers.

"Max!" Mike exclaimed, surprise evident on his face. "What...um, what are you doing here?" he added slightly nervously, knowing how those blue eyes could give a death glare that could almost rival El's.

Max handed the popcorn to Ryan and then turned to Mike leaning in to give him a hug but gripping him so tightly that Mike gulped anxiously. "El called and said you were chaperoning," she said in a sweet voice that was for Ivy and Ryan's benefit only. Mike knew she was pissed at him for wanting to watch her son like he would do something wrong. Max pulled back with the same fake smile on her face. "So, I thought why not come along too?!"

Oh shit.

"I've already got the tickets," Max said happily looking down at them for a moment before handing two over to Ivy and Ryan who thanked her before sharing sheepish smiles with each other.

"Cool," Mike said awkwardly before clearing his throat. "Um, what do you want Ivy?"

"She can share my popcorn," Ryan piped up, blushing slightly when Ivy beamed at him in thanks. Mike tried desperately not to roll his eyes.

"It's okay Paladin you can buy me something. Come on," Max said teasingly before linking her arm with Mike's and hauling him along to the counter, giving Ivy and Ryan some privacy.

"Max it's all well and good you being here, but I think I can chaperone just *fine* by myself." Mike mumbled as he joined the queue with the red head.

She glared at him, "well clearly not from what El's been telling me! What the hell are you thinking Michael Wheeler? You think my thirteen-year-old son is going to go making out with your daughter?! Just because you and El were sticking your tongues down each other's throats at that age, doesn't mean –"

"We were *not* sticking our tongues down each other's throats at that age!" Mike replied hotly, his cheeks flushing red.

Max snorted and rolled her eyes, "yeah right Wheeler." She said nudging his shoulder. The queue was getting smaller and they shuffled closer to the counter, Mike taking the opportunity to glance over his shoulder and make sure Ivy and Ryan were still in sight.

He sighed as he watched Ivy laughing whilst Ryan threw popcorn in the air and caught them in his mouth. He thought he was doing a great job but Mike could tell by the intensity in Ivy's eyes that she was helping him with her powers.

"What can I get you?" said a preppy young girl from behind the counter.

"We'll have two hot dogs please and three coke zeroes." Max commented before Mike could even open his mouth. She turned to him and smirked, "seeing as you've been traumatising my son it's only fair that you pay."

Mike exhaled an annoyed breath but handing over the cash to the young girl who thanked him and gave him a small amount of change which Max immediately grabbed and pocketed. "Hey!" Mike called in indignation whilst the Zoomer chuckled.

"Consider that my tip for having to spend my evening with you Wheeler when I could be with my husband."

Mike and Max made their way back to Ivy and Ryan, handing over a large coke zero that Mike insisted had two straws in it instead of just the one that Max had placed into the lid. They handed over their tickets to be checked and then walked down the dimly light corridor towards the screen room.

Just as Ivy and Ryan started to climb the stairs to find where they were sitting, Max grabbed Mike's arm and stopped him from following them. He turned around to look at her in confusion to see she was smirking. "We're not sitting with them." She stated, desperately trying to contain her laughter at Mike's mortified expression.

"What?!" he said in confusion and panic as he squinted down at his ticket and realised that him and Max were sitting literally as far away from Ryan and Ivy that they could possibly be. Mike glared, his eyes slowly and menacingly latching onto the amused blue eyes in front of him. "Max I am going to kill you." He said through clenched teeth.

Max cackled in amusement and pulled him along to their own seats. Mike kept looking back at Ivy and Ryan who looked delighted with the turn of events and settled down into their own seats, talking avidly whilst sharing popcorn and their drink.

The cinema was soon filled with people either seeing the Harry Potter movie for the first time since it was released a week ago or by others eager to see it again. Some people were even dressed up which Mike would have been amused by if it wasn't for the fact that his daughter

was an aisle and at least ten rows away from him, sitting with Ryan *alone*.

He craned his neck trying to watch the two of them even when the lights went down and the movie started. Mike's eyes narrowed as he watched Ryan whisper something to Ivy making her giggle and smile at him in a way he could only describe as adoration.

"You know I haven't actually seen this movie yet," Max said casually as if she didn't have a care in the world as she bit into her hot dog, her eyes glued to the screen.

Mike ignored her, his eyes still on the younger teenagers. His heart was suddenly in his throat as he just about spotted Ryan's hand moving on top of Ivy's. His daughter's cheeks looked like they were blushing, it was evident even in the dark cinema room and she smiled shyly at Ryan, he replied with a bashful grin before they turned back to the screen.

"Oh my god," Mike croaked, colour draining from his face. "They're holding hands. Max they're *holding hands*!" he practically shook the red head who was trying to eat her hot dog at the time. His actions made the fried onions go everywhere and Max huffed in annoyance.

"I can see that Wheeler," Max replied in a harsh whisper as she picked bits of fried onions off her jeans. "You know you're like Hopper right?" she said raising her eyebrow at Mike who turned back to look at her with a frown. She smirked, "well you are Hopper without the moustache and buff bod of course..."

"You're disgusting." Mike said looking at Max with a flat expression before turning his gaze back onto the teenagers.

"And you're ridiculous," Max countered, finishing off her hot dog before reaching for Mike's which he hadn't touched. He wasn't exactly hungry when all he felt was sick at the way his daughter, his baby, his *first born* was going all gooey eyed over a boy.

"You know my son is a good kid, right?" Max asked slightly annoyed that Ryan was getting so much heat off Mike. "He's got excellent grades, yeah he's cool like me and knows how to skate board, but he's

in the chess team and AV club for god's sake! He's not going to hurt Ivy Mike. Me and Lucas's haven't raised him to be disrespectful to women. You should know that."

Mike suddenly felt a surge of guilt rising in his stomach and he finally turned away from his daughter and Ryan and looked at Max remorsefully. "I'm sorry. It's...it's not Ryan okay? It's just what he represents." He admitted with a sigh. "She's doesn't need her daddy anymore, she just wants boys and it sucks."

Max gave him a sympathetic look and patted his arm. "Okay I don't get the whole dad and daughter thing because I have boys. But trust me I feel the same way with Ryan and Zach. They used to both be such mamma's boys when they were growing up, and now it's all video games and hanging out with their friends."

"Maybe I should ask El if she wants another baby..." Mike mumbled more to himself than Max who burst out laughing and was shushed by three people.

"You can't just have more babies because your current babies are growing up." Max teased, whispering this time in amusement.

"I guess you're right," Mike heaved a sigh, his eyes were on the screen, but a million memories were flooding through his brain. The birth of his three children, their first words and steps, their smiles and laughter. It was all swimming in his mind, but he tried to remember that all of those memories were good, perfect in fact and he wouldn't want to go back and change them.

"I'm always right," Max said wisely taking a sip of her drink. Mike snorted in amusement at how the evening had turned into the weirdest double date of his life.

He tried to enjoy the rest of the movie and worked very hard at not turning back to watch Ivy and Ryan as much as he could. Of course his resolve broke at times and he was gazing back at the teenagers, every time he looked at them though they were smiling and happy. Feeling a bit more at ease Mike turned back around and reached for his hot dog, only to find the cardboard holder was empty.

"Where's my hot dog?" he said suspiciously to Max who just shrugged and licked her fingers.

Mike huffed in annoyance and stood up to go and buy another. "Get me some nachos Wheeler!" Max shouted, earning her another round of shushing whilst Mike tried to duck out of the room without blocking people's view of the screen. He couldn't help but grin in amusement though, because while Max was certainly the craziest out of the bunch, she was still one of his best friends and he loved her like a sister.

"Do you have a good time honey?" Mike asked Ivy as he drove them home. El had been enjoying a night in Benny's with the boys, sending him a few screenshots of her trying to do a selfie with James looking embarrassed and Ben smiling widely, showing a few gaps in his teeth. Mike immediately made the photo his phone's wallpaper.

"I had the best time," Ivy replied sighing dreamily. Mike glanced over at her for a moment, she was leaning against the passenger door window, her eyes slightly glazed over and a sappy grin on her face.

Mike couldn't help but smile too, because his children and his wife meant everything to him, and if a boy, especially a boy who Mike already loved was making his daughter smile like that, then was it really so wrong if they did date?

"Ivy?" Mike asked quietly when they reached a red light.

"Yeah?" she replied, looking back at him with the same dopey smile still on her face. He looked at her for a moment, she really was a perfect mixture of him and El and he couldn't be prouder of everything she had achieved so far. And while he wanted to keep her his baby girl forever, he knew that there was so many wonderful memories to come.

"I love you."

"I love you too dad."

7th November 2009

"Where are you taking me?" El chuckled as Mike lead her through Mirkwood, taking her on a detour to their destination. Eggo was running ahead of them, trained enough that she would return when Mike or El whistled.

"It's a surprise," Mike grinned, his smile warm and happy as he watched his wife with love. Today was their 15th wedding anniversary and their walk through Mirkwood wasn't the only surprise he had planned for El today.

Tonight there was going to be a party at the house, he had left Joyce and his mom in charge of getting everything decorated with the help of the kids. Mike knew El would love it, especially because the whole party would be attending as well as Becky, Joel and Danny who was bringing his new girlfriend.

The trees were thinning out slightly and Mike turned to El squeezing her hand gently. "Have you guessed where we are going yet?" he teased with a smirk.

El chuckled, looking around and taking in the familiarity of Mirkwood. Some of the trees had changed over the years either from storms, heavy snow or from growth. Her hazel eyes fell onto a clearing up ahead and she smiled softly, "I have an inkling."

Mike grinned knowing she had figured it out but didn't say anything until they were in the large clearing, both of them looking around to the area that they had got married 15 years ago.

"I can't believe we haven't been back here for years," El sighed, shaking her head slightly in bemusement before looking back to Mike. He was stood in front of her, both of them next to one of the trees that had held up the floral arch that they said their vows under.

"We've been busy," Mike responded with a shrug of his shoulders as he reached for El's other hand as well. Eggo was running around, only appearing now and again to make sure Mike and El were still there before hurrying off again.

"I am happy we could come back here though." Mike said looking nowhere but at El, captivated by her beautiful eyes. Even from the

day he had met her in these woods, frozen and terrified, those eyes had always been open to him.

"Me too." El said with a grin, her eyes locked on his and sparkled with happiness. "I love the kids so much, but it is nice to be here just with you." She admitted before they both laughed when Eggo barked in the distance.

"And with our youngest child," Mike teased regarding the dog whilst El giggled and beamed up at her husband. For a moment they just took in the silence, staring at one another, basking in each other's gaze and love. Sometimes words didn't need to be said between them to understand how the other was feeling. El knew Mike loved her with everything in him and Mike knew that El loved him more than anything.

They were bonded for life and had been since the moment they met. Perhaps even before then. Mike often wondered if it was knitted into their DNA, that they were always meant to be with each other. They were perfectly made for one another.

"So," Mike exhaled, his voice breathy and almost nervous. "I got something for you."

El's eyebrows raised in surprise, "I thought we said we had everything we needed?" She wasn't angry though, simply touched that Mike had ignored their discussion and got something for her.

Mike chuckled, his hand already in his jacket pocket. "I know we did, but I had already paid for this and I wanted you to have it."

El watched curiously as Mike pulled out a small ring box and opened it, displaying a beautiful silver ring with five birth stones delicately set into the piece of jewellery. She gasped in delight, her eyes flickering quickly from the beautiful ring to her beautiful husband.

Mike still looked nervous, worried that she wouldn't like the gift. "Remember your promise ring I gave you for your sixteenth? And how the diamond came out when Ivy was playing with it when she was five?" he asked carefully whilst El nodded along, captivated by her husband.

"Well I knew you always kept the ring anyway in your jewellery box. I had it reshaped and then had our birth stones, and Ivy, James and Ben's birth stones added to the ring. It's still got the original promise written into the band." Mike explained pointing to the inside where the writing was delicate and beautiful.

"Oh Mike," El choked, her eyes welling up with tears as she looked at the garnet, opal, topaz, sapphire and tanzanite representing her family.

"Do you like it?" Mike asked quietly, his voice wavering with the nervous that he so clearly felt. He was so worried he had ruined her promise ring and she would hate it.

"I love it." El said clearly, wrapping her arms around Mike's neck whilst his hands went to her hips, the box still against his palm. "And I love you so much." El leaned in and kissed Mike, he resounded enthusiastically, their lips moving like perfect pieces of a puzzle. Their kiss sent electricity immediately through their bodies, awakening all of their senses.

They eventually pulled back enough for Mike to place the ring on El's right hand where she admired it for a moment with a smile. "It's not a promise ring anymore," she mused happily staring down at the birth stones. She looked back up at Mike, "it's an eternity ring now."

Mike grinned, relief and happiness written over his face as he watched El for a moment. "You're so beautiful," he whispered tenderly.

She looked back up at him, her eyes soft and warm. "And you are beautiful." She told him seriously but with a gentle smile. "Inside and out."

They hugged and kissed, El lying her head on Mike's chest and feeling a warmth of comfort rush through her body at the sound of his steady heartbeat against her ear.

"I wish I could have got you something," she admitted in a whisper, her head still against his chest whilst Mike kissed the top of her head and nuzzled his nose against her hair.

"It doesn't matter," he replied softly. "You and the kids are all I need." Eggo barked in indignation. "And you too!" Mike called, lifting his head to look at their Labrador in the distance whilst El chuckled.

She looked around at the familiar trees, specifically at the one they had been married right in front of, and an idea struck her. El grinned and looked up at Mike, "I have an idea."

She turned slightly towards the tree and moved her hand out in front of her, dipping her head down in concentration as she stared at the bark of the old tree.

Mike watched on, still in awe of El's powers as beautiful italic writing etched itself into the bark, forever a part of the tree for its eternity of life.

El + Mike

11/07/83

El finished off the design by surrounding it in a heart and turned to her husband with a pleased grin. He smiled back, his eyes filled with adoration and love. It was crazy to think it was 26 years since they had met and 15 years since they had been married.

So much had happened in that time, but Mike wouldn't change a thing of it. Not if it meant losing what he had now. And that was a family, something he had never realised he needed for himself until the day he had met El.

AN: I'm crying okay, are you happy now?! *Sobs* PRETTY PLEASE with sugar on top let me know what you thought of this final chapter!

So...does anyone want a sequel to The Life You Deserve?

It would be quite different from TLYD, with focus on the Wheeler family, their teenage children and their powers. With a supernatural enemy that threatens to ruin everything our favourite characters have built. Anyone interested?

P.S. I'm thinking Ryan and Ivy's ship name should be Rivy lol